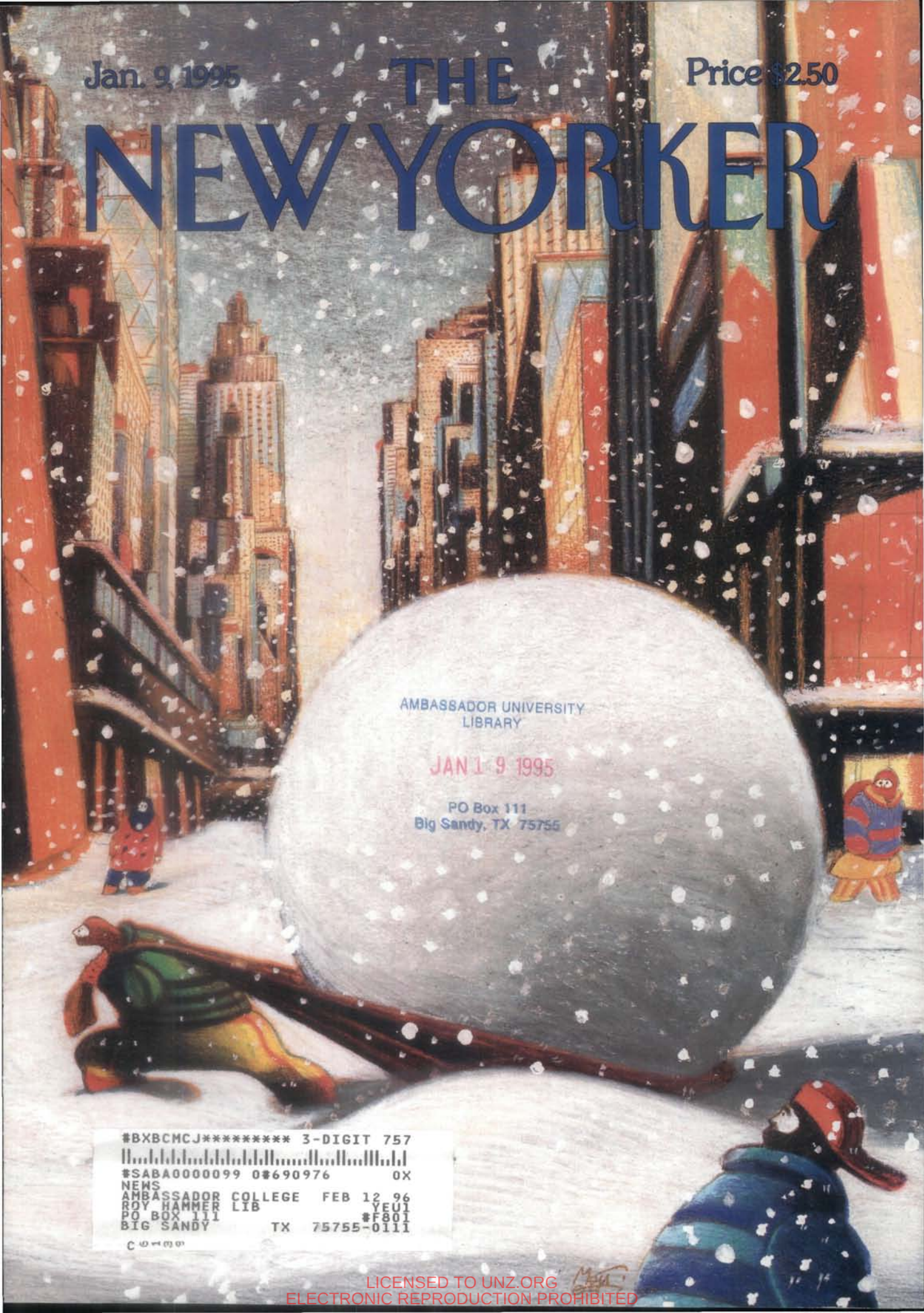

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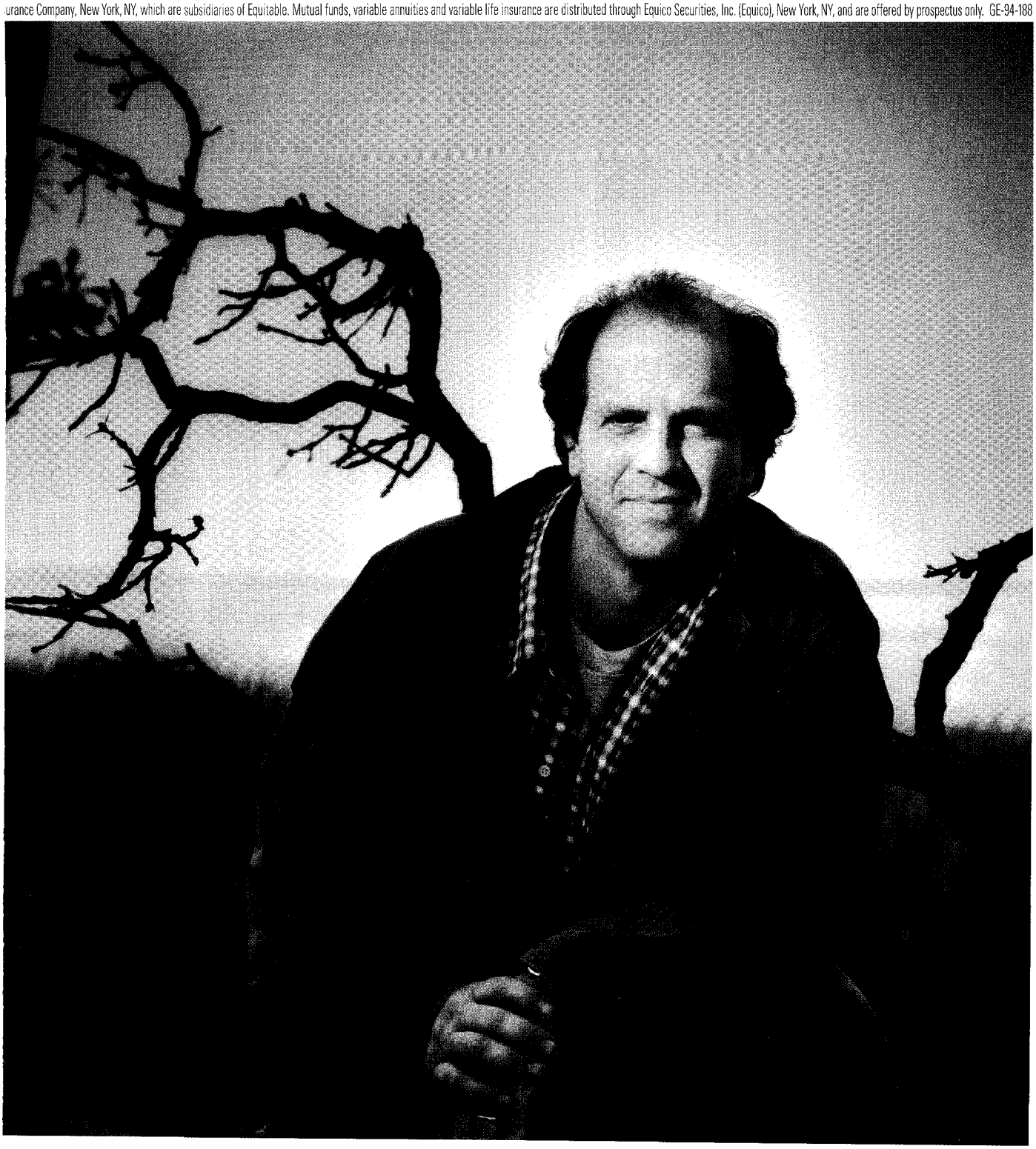

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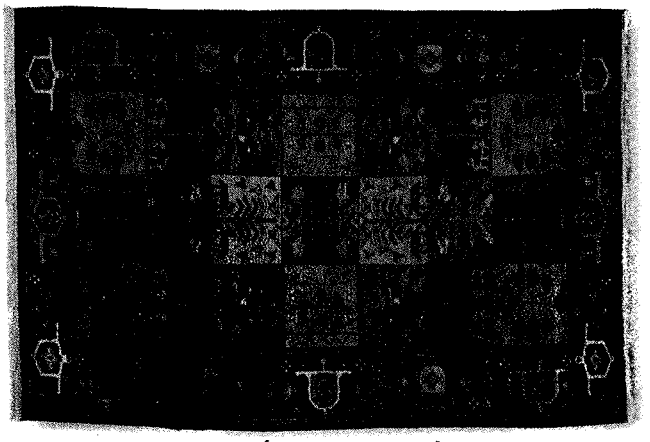

{*Village Garden*}

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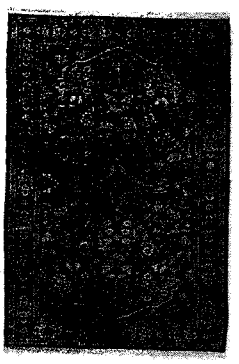

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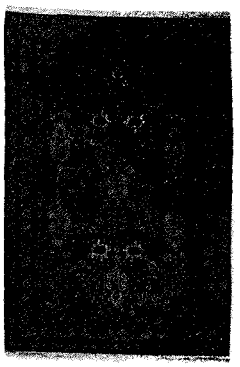

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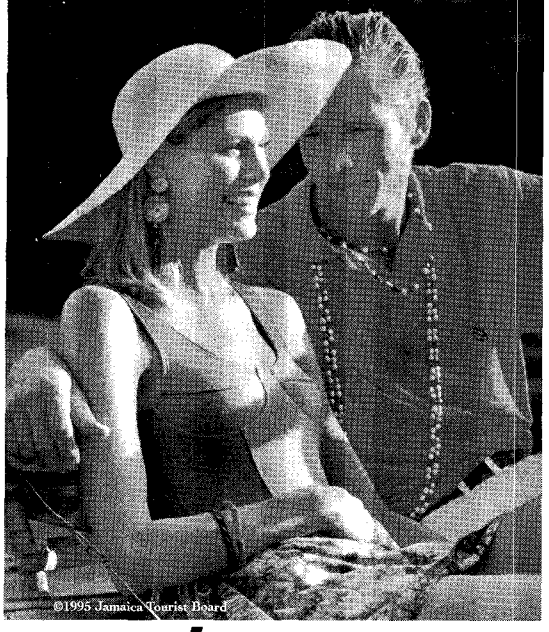

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A ploy for the Democrats: use it and lose it.

THE surviving Democrats of the Senate and the House of Representatives, now straggling back to Washington for this week's opening of the 104th Congress, are short on ideas, short on enthusiasm, and short on votes. About the only thing they have in surplus is explanations for the electoral disaster that befell them in November, helpfully provided by the op-ed irregulars of the opinion industry. The consensus in the industry, even that part of it generally sympathetic to the Democrats, is that the Democrats' problem was Bill Clinton. The President was too much the craven, eager-to-please compromiser (except, of course, in those cases—identifiable only in retrospect—when he pigheadedly refused to meet the other side halfway). The President foolishly made gays in the military his opening priority. (Never mind that it was the Republicans who turned up the volume on that issue, while Clinton, following "centrist" advice, tried desperately to quiet it.) The President failed to keep his promise of a middle-class tax cut (the price of keeping his much more important promise to reduce the deficit). The President miscalculated by focussing on health-care reform instead of welfare reform. (If he had done the reverse, the same attackers would have attacked him, and not unfairly, for putting too much emphasis on the problems of the poor and ignoring middle-class anxiety about health insurance.)

No doubt many of the complaints about Clinton—and there are plenty more where these come from—are valid. What the indictment lacks is any sense that the alternative to Clinton was not, and will not be, some abstract embodiment of personal and political perfection but, rather, another mortal politician with his own set of weaknesses and strengths, his own blindnesses, his own scuffed baggage. It's far from clear that the country would have been better served by Jerry Brown's lone-wolf populism, or Paul Tsongas's pinched deficit-obsession, or Bob Kerrey's ironic detachment, or even Al Gore's Beltway environmentalism—let alone by another four years of George Bush's fecklessness. The real-world alternatives to Clinton might not have made Clinton's mistakes, but they would surely have made their own. Nor is it obvious that Bob Dole or Phil Gramm or Dick Cheney, should one

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of them defeat Clinton two years hence, can be counted on to lead us to the New Jerusalem.

At this point, halfway between the last Presidential election and the next (and thus, blessedly, at the maximum distance from both), it might be worth the Democrats' while to consider some causes of their distress more amenable to change than the imperfectibility of human beings in general and Bill Clinton in particular. One direction for them has been pointed, albeit negatively, by no less a seer than Newt Gingrich, the author of, among other things, the Republican congressional victory. As his very first act of business in the Speaker's chair this week, Gingrich plans to gavel through a change in the House rules which would require a three-fifths majority for passage of any increase in tax rates. Here, then, is something for the new Democratic opposition to oppose: not only this new rule but also the use and abuse of "supermajority" gimmicks to prevent action in both Houses of Congress.

It's safe to say that if the 103rd Congress had managed to enact a health-insurance program the composition of the 104th would be somewhat different. But our political system, designed from scratch in 1789 on the basis of necessarily limited practical experience with democratic governance, is overwhelmingly resistant to coherent, ambitious action. Uniquely among serious democracies, ours requires the unanimous concurrence of three separately elected, essentially independent "governments"—House, Senate, and Presidency—for legislation to be passed. One of those governments, the Senate, is not even pretendedly democratic, apportioned as it is by states rather than by people; and, within the Senate, the use of an extraconstitutional (and probably unconstitutional) maneuver, the filibuster, means that a working majority is not fifty-one of the hundred senators but sixty—the number required to invoke "cloture."

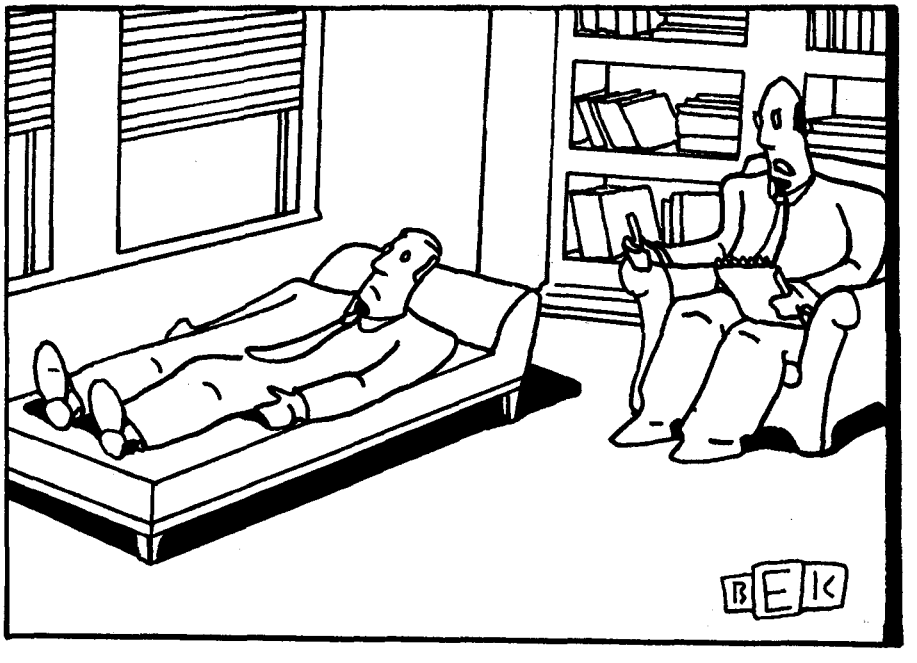
Just how undemocratic these arrangements are was shown by Tom Geoghegan, a Chicago labor lawyer and a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics, in a little-noticed preëlection essay in *The New Republic*. Geoghegan ran the numbers, and found that senators sufficient to block action can represent a population base of as little as ten per cent. Even a simple majority of senators can represent just sixteen per cent of the people. By the same calculation, to get a bill through the Senate can require, in effect, a popular majority of ninety per cent. This grotesquerie has got worse since the Framers' day. In 1789, when the first Senate convened and the filibuster had not yet been invented, it took senators representing a population base of at least thirty-three per cent to prevail.

Geoghegan's preferred solution would reconstitute the Senate along the lines of something closer to one person, one vote—a dangerously radical idea, perhaps, but one that was passionately advocated by James Madison at the Constitutional Convention and has lately been tried with some success in democracies ranging from Lithuania to South Africa. That's unlikely to happen anytime soon. But the filibuster just might be vulnerable. Two Democratic senators, Connecticut's Joseph Lieberman and Iowa's Tom Harkin, representing respectively the moderate and liberal wings of their party, have been plumping for a rules change that would turn the filibuster from a blocking mechanism into one that could merely delay. This suggests a ploy for the Democrats: issue a standing invitation to their Republican colleagues to join them in adopting the Lieberman-Harkin rules change—and then filibuster *everything*. Capital gains, death penalties, orphanages—the works. The Republicans, now a majority but not yet a supermajority, just might decide they would rather keep their Contract with America than perpetuate a disgraceful form of minority rule—one, moreover, that can cut both ways.

And the filibuster *is* disgraceful—so much so that its only legitimate use ought to be its own abolition. The Democrats will be tempted to use it as a routine legislative weapon. They shouldn't. In the long run, the filibuster is a worse deal for those who see democratic self-government as an instrument of public action (and have principled qualms about using the filibuster to begin with) than it is for those who wish the "public sector" would just go away. Say what you will about the reasons for last year's health-care debacle, the truth is that the stake that was driven through health care's heart was a filibuster—and not even a filibuster against health care. (The nominal target was the crime bill, but the delay ran out the health-care clock.)

Getting rid of the filibuster would also be in the short-term interest of the Republicans, and in the long-term interest of those among them who are confident of their party's electoral future, and who would like to use government to do something more creative and interesting than cancel itself out—Newt Gingrich, for example. The public fascination with term limits and the line-item veto—whatever one may think of the merits of those proposals—shows that voters are willing to consider systemic explanations as well as moralistic ones for their government's manifest failures. Filibustering the filibuster would be a way for the Democrats, despite their minority status, to get into the act.

—Hendrik Hertzberg



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SCHOOL PRAYER

It seems to me that Stephen L. Carter's discussion of school prayer (Annals of Law, December 5th), like most writings on the responsibilities of schools, bypasses the most essential—and in my mind the only explicit—educational task of schools: teaching young people to think critically.

Moral values won't hold up if they are simply absorbed, like practical advice. Having a value implies that one has considered the alternatives. If schools could successfully teach children to think, all else would be tautology. A person who knows how to *think* will not only be able to figure out things like right and wrong and cause and effect but may well be able to hold a job, write a computer program, and teach other people to do the same. What our nation needs to discover is what we must do to help schools achieve this goal more consistently and more easily.

BETSY FOGELMAN TIGHE
Santa Fe, N.M.

It's simplistic to think that a "moment of silence" (or prayer, for that matter) will have any impact on our children's values. Ninety per cent of American adults believe that public schools should teach a belief in democracy—yet less than forty per cent of them vote. Two-thirds believe that schools should preach sexual abstinence—while out-of-wedlock births skyrocket. I'm advocating a "moment of outrage" to express how I feel as we as a society stand idly by, watching our children—following their parents' examples—shoot each other and throw each other out of windows.

E. J. HIRT
Evanston, Ill.

As a Christian, I'm outraged with the people on the right who claim that those who are against teacher-led school prayer are anti-God. They seem to forget that this country is a democracy, not a theocracy, and that students can pray anytime they want to—it is only coerced, teacher-led prayer that is objectionable. I'm sick of hearing the argument that "it never hurt anyone to pray," which people on the other side use constantly. It doesn't hurt anyone to bow to Mecca on Friday afternoon, either—should we mandate that, too? We are a multireligious society and we should respect all the religions of the world. It is the ethnocentric, narrow-minded viewpoint of a certain segment of our society that has to be stopped.

MATTHEW HOOVER
Cleveland, Ohio

Mr. Carter suggests that a group "deeply imbued with the spirit of Biblical literalism . . . would be expected to come out strongly for classroom prayer." On the contrary, one imbued with Biblical literalism would heed Matthew 6:6, wherein Jesus commands his followers, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." To advocate school prayer is to oppose not only the dictates of the Supreme Court but those of the Sermon on the Mount as well.

HERBERT W. WALKER
Novelty, Ohio

IMAGE CONTROL

I don't think that Adam Gopnik, in his review of the Whitney Museum's "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art" (The Art World, December 5th), gets it. When Mr. Gopnik writes that this exhibit cannot be looked at, what does he mean? Is he suggesting that the

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show contains "bad" art? In my opinion, the show is brilliant because it demonstrates through visual images the tension between the specificity of racialized bodies and the imagined contours of those bodies. Mr. Gopnik states that visual images are the "weakest link in the whole chain of racist thought," and that they are "empty" of meaning. But the repetition of representations—for instance, that of the black male criminal—produces a generalization that seems natural and translates as: all black males are by nature criminals. Visual clichés have cultural power not because they correspond to reality but because they provide a metaphorical framework for organizing meaning. Unless, as Thelma Golden points out in her catalogue essay, control of image production shifts to the subjects of the images, the imaginary will continue to stand in for the real. I am not suggesting that African-Americans will necessarily produce "true" images, but if African-Americans do not take control of image production the gap between the real and the imagined will remain unexamined.

CARRA LEAH HOOD
New Haven, Conn.

DEPT. OF STRANGE COINCIDENCES

David Remnick, in "Lost in Space" (States of Mind, December 5th), writes, "Rush Limbaugh, whose reach increases all the time, popularizes the Reaganite creed for at least twenty million loyal listeners every week." In the same issue, Roman Polanski is quoted by Lawrence Weschler (in "Artist in Exile") as saying, "And why do I have to do what public opinion says is right? It's often wrong. Just the other day, I was reading that twenty million Americans don't even believe that man ever walked on the moon."

Could Remnick and Polanski by any chance be referring to the same twenty million?

ROBERT N. ROTH
Oberlin, Ohio

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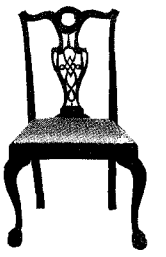

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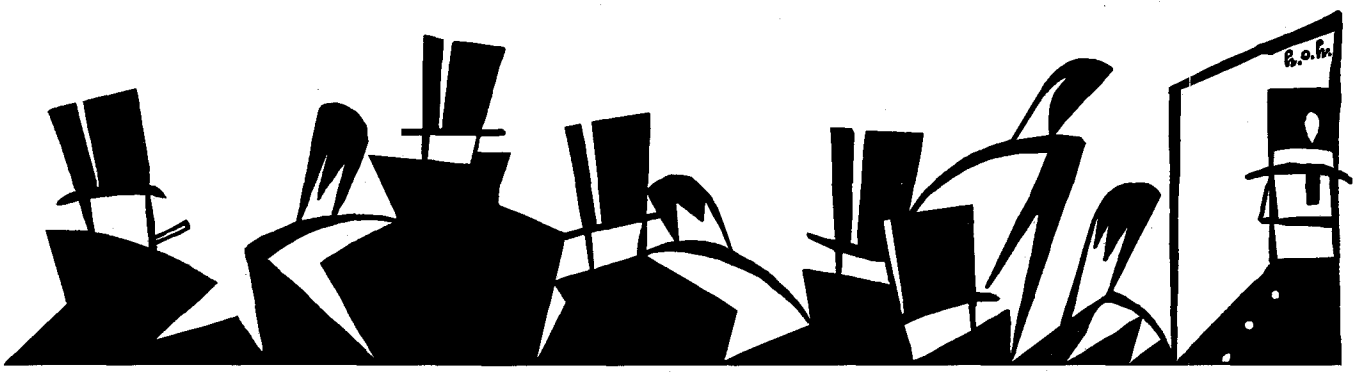

THE THEATRE

Slowdown on Broadway

LOVERS of musicals may be in for a long winter. The only Broadway openings likely before spring are "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," and the new revue "Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller." Otherwise, diehard musical fans, your choices are limited. You can head to the hinterlands and catch Carol Channing in "Hello, Dolly!" (Dayton, Ohio, is the current stop, with San Antonio and Houston to follow). You can take in "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the Paramount (January 17-29), even though that cavernous auditorium could hardly be called theatre-friendly. Or you might try to see a trio of soon-to-shutter Broadway shows: "Guys and Dolls" and "Passion," both of which close this weekend, and "Carousel," which closes January 15; seats are available for all three.

Hearth huggers, on the other hand, can spend the winter listening to new CDs. The recording of "Passion," as it happens, has won many adherents, including quite a few who did not care for the show on the stage. If you're in the mood to hear the famous waltz from "Carousel," you should consider "Broadway: The Music of Richard Rodgers," the latest CD from Julie Andrews. Miss Andrews' much heralded return to Broadway, in "Victor/Victoria," has been put off until autumn, but the singer's tribute to Rodgers—thirteen songs featuring her gloriously intact voice—should tide musical fans over until then.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

HIM—A play written by and starring Christopher Walken. Preview on Jan. 4. Opens Jan. 5 at 8 and runs through Jan. 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

I'VE GOT THE SHAKES—A new play written and directed by Richard Foreman—involving fish-flavored Popsicles, a spiritual giraffe, and a teacher in search of something to teach—and performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. Opens Jan. 5 at 8. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS—Presenting Steve Allen in "The Mikado," which plays Jan. 5-8 and Jan. 12-15. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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OPENED RECENTLY

AMERICA DREAMING—A musical-theatre work about race, culture, and assimilation, by the poet Chiori Miyagawa and the composer Tan Dun. Presented by the Vineyard Theatre and the Music-Theatre Group. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Jan. 7.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

CARMEN—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company's version of the opera, with Everett Quinton in the title role. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

THE CHERRY ORCHARD—The Jean Cocteau Repertory delivers a by-the-book performance of Chekhov's prescient, era-ending play. When Firs, the Ranevsky family's ancient servant, remarks that nobody can recall the recipe for the wonderful preserves once made from the orchard's fruit, he might as well be lamenting the inability of unnuanced productions such as this to revive the power of the author's great last work. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL—Patrick Stewart reprises his one-man version of the Dickens classic. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 8.)

COMEDY TONIGHT—A revue that, for some reason, sets out to illustrate four kinds of comedy—standup, physical (juggling, in this case), musical, and political. Joy Behar, Michael Davis, Dorothy Loudon, and Mort Sahl perform in half-hour segments that simply don't add up, and you're likely to feel sated without being satisfied. (Lunt Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

A DOLL'S LIFE—The York Theatre Company presents a revised version of the 1982 musical inspired by Ibsen's "A Doll's House." The book and lyrics are by Betty Comden and Adolph Green; the music is by Larry Grossman. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Jan. 22.)

DYLAN THOMAS: RETURN JOURNEY and THE TRUMAN CAPOTE TALK SHOW—Two one-man shows written by, and starring, the Welsh actor Bob Kingdom, and directed by Anthony Hopkins and Kevin Knight, respectively. The shows are performed in repertory, and they're both laced with alcohol-enhanced humor. "Dylan Thomas" has the poetry, but "Truman Capote" is the chattier, more enjoyable affair. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 307-4100.)

GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL—The audience is part of the group of mourners in this comedy by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack, set in a Jewish mortuary. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

GREASE!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. With Brooke Shields as Rizzo. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

HAPGOOD—Set in London near the end of the Cold War, Tom Stoppard's 1988 play, which looks at the world of espionage through the lens of particle physics (or is it the other way around?), is a kind of dramatization of Heisenbergian uncertainty. The production is as mesmerizing as the play is bewildering, thanks to the black-and-white projections by Wendall K. Harrington, which evoke both the dreariness and the excitement of the shadow world of spies. Stockard Channing, Josef Sommer, and David Strathairn, under the direction of Jack O'Brien, give confident, watchable performances that nevertheless don't bring

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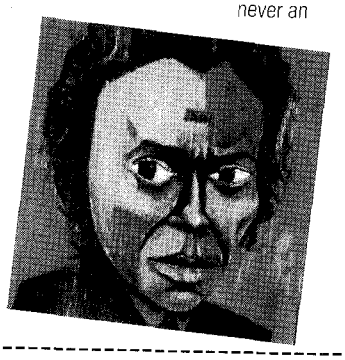

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

you closer to the heart of the matter. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

INSIDE OUT—A six-woman musical extolling the benefits of group therapy; the actors do more with their roles than you'd expect, and their voices are strong. Henry Fonte's direction is sometimes heavy-handed, but Gary Slavin's choreography enriches every song. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

AN INSPECTOR CALLS—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JACKIE MASON: POLITICALLY INCORRECT—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JELLY ROLL!—The snakily elegant Vernel Bagneris plays Jelly Roll Morton, in a wonderful show that traces the musician's transformation from New Orleans dandy into jazz legend. Morten Gunnar Larsen provides the thrilling piano accompaniment. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

THE LITTLE BOOK OF PROFESSOR ENIGMA—A black comedy by the late Harry Kondoleon. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Jan. 8.)

NUNSENSE 2: THE SEQUEL—In the second coming of writer-director Dan Goggin's hit, five talented actresses take the veil and perform a revue to raise money for their convent. There's dancing, singing, boozing, and bingo, but none of it saves the show from the clutches of cliché. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

OLD TIMES—The Independent Theatre Company's production of Harold Pinter's 1971 drama about sexual obsession. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

PASSION—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, with Jere Shea, Marin Mazzie, and Donna Murphy, who gives a stunning performance as the predatory heroine. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 7.)

THE PETRIFIED PRINCE—A new musical, based on a screenplay by Ingmar Bergman and directed by Harold Prince. The score and lyrics are by Michael John LaChiusa, and the book is by Edward Gallardo. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Jan. 15.)

POLKA—A dark comedy by Tony Greenleaf. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Jan. 15.)

PUBLIC ENEMY—Kenneth Branagh's play is not much more than a moody knockabout, but it does offer an enticing conceit: a Belfast boy (Paul Ronan) works the night-club circuit as a Jimmy Cagney impersonator until the Troubles turn his gangster fantasies into real-life drama. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL—Performances of "...Y Se Armó la Mojiganga" ("...And the Carnival Erupted"), Jorge Alí Triana's musical based on a Colombian folk tale, run in repertory with the comedy "Café con Leche," by Gloria González. Simultaneous English translation is available at the musical. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

SHOW BOAT—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SLAVS! THINKING ABOUT THE LONGSTANDING PROBLEMS OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS—A new play by Tony Kushner. Mary Shultz, Marisa Tomei, and Joseph Wiseman are in the cast. (Reviewed in this issue.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

SUNSET BOULEVARD—Glenn Close takes the monumental role of Norma Desmond and makes it something all her own, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's homage to Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's 1950 fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia. Also with George Hearn, Alan Campbell, and Alice Ripley; directed by Trevor Nunn. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

THAT'S LIFE!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THREE TALL WOMEN—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

TRAFFICKING IN BROKEN HEARTS—A play by Edwin Sanchez about a Times Square hustler (Giancarlo Esposito), an uptight attorney (Neil Pepe), and a young runaway (Anthony Rapp). (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Jan. 7.)

TWO JOHNS KISSIN LESLIE—A new show in a new home, by the improv troupe Chicago City Limits. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

THE VENETIAN TWINS—An eighteenth-century Italian comedy by Carlo Goldoni, in a new translation by Michael Feingold. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

VITA & VIRGINIA—Eileen Atkins' Virginia Woolf shares the stage with Vanessa Redgrave's Vita Sackville-West in a play that Atkins put together from the letters that the women exchanged during their eighteen-year friendship. Redgrave is imposing and glamorous, but the brilliance of Woolf's writing stacks the theatrical deck in Atkins' favor, and she gives a quietly sensational, riveting performance. Zoe Caldwell directed. (12/12/94) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

YOU SHOULD BE SO LUCKY—A long and largely unrewarding comedy in which Charles Busch appears, out of drag, as a shrinking-violet electrologist who comes into his own via an unlikely benefactor (Stephen Pearlman). Nell Campbell plays his sister, and Julie Halston is a veritable force of nature as a Scarsdale matron. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

ZOOMAN AND THE SIGN—A revival of Charles Fuller's 1981 drama about the ripple effect of a random act of murder on a Philadelphia family and the neighborhood they live in. The story is all too familiar to urban residents (and to anyone who reads a newspaper), but it isn't a cliché. Zooman, a psychopathic street kid who kills a twelve-year-old girl, is played with chilling zest by Larry Gilliard, Jr., who brings out not just the character's rage but, more disturbingly, his sense of entitlement to violence. Seret Scott directed. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Jan. 15.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CAROUSEL:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 15.) . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 8.) . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

A CERTAIN LEVEL OF DENIAL—Karen Finley performs a work she premièred at the Serious Fun! Festival in 1992. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520. Jan. 6-7 at 8.)

PASS THE BLUTWURST, BITTE—John Kelly's performance piece about the life of the artist Egon Schiele. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 5-7 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 3 and 7:30. Through Jan. 15.)

STALLING—Sharon Hayes' one-woman show deals with privacy, among other issues, and is set in a modified bathroom. (WOW Café, 59 E. 4th St. 460-8067. Jan. 5-7 at 8.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Jan. 4 at 8: "Symphonic Dances," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 8: "Interplay," "Glazunov Pas de Deux," "Bugaku," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Jan. 6 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "Bugaku," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 2: "Pastoral Dances," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "Valse Triste," "Zakouski," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 1: "Ancient Airs and Dances," "Symphonic Dances," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 7: "Divertimento No. 15," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at 8: "Pastoral Dances," "Bugaku," and "Western Symphony." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through Feb. 26.)

"ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT"—A series of performances by several contemporary-dance companies, all presenting new works. Jan. 4 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 2 and 7:30: David Dorfman Dance, in two new untitled duets; "Bull," his 1994 collaboration with the saxophonist and performance artist Dan Froot; and "Hey," a 1994 group work. Dorfman takes an athletic approach to psychological exploration. When he's costumed in shoulder pads and a helmet, it could be a statement about how guarded men are—or it could be because the dancing is that dangerous. His best pieces are tender, violent, and funny all at once. . . . ¶ Jan. 5-6 at 8: Jane Comfort and Company, in "S/He." . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 8: Poppo & the GoGo Boys, in a new evening-length work. . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at 8: Forces of Nature, in "The Life and Legend of Marie LaVeau" and three other dances. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. The series continues through Jan. 22.)

LA CONJA MIMBRE Y VARETA—A flamenco dance-and-music ensemble. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Jan. 5-7 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 2.)

ANNABELLE GAMSON—Premièring two works, "Waiting" and "Pentimento." Solo pieces and excerpts from "The Women of Union Square" are also on the bill. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 5-8 at 8:30.)

DOUGLAS DUNN & DANCERS—In the première of "Caracole." (541 Broadway. 924-0077. Jan. 7-8 at 5 and 7, and Jan. 10 at 7. Through Jan. 20.)

CATTERSON ASSOCIATES—Pat Catterson's company, in "Dust," "Tian an Men," and "The Ballroom," a tribute to the choreographer's parents, who were champion ballroom dancers. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 6-7 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 3.)

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NIGHT LIFE

For Gatton

THE Washington *Post* once dubbed the late Danny Gatton "the pre-eminent guitarist of the post-World War II generation," but most people had never heard of him. Gatton did little to shake the "world's greatest unknown guitarist" mantle: he hated touring and rarely played outside of his native Washington, D.C. His blistering electric-guitar work demonstrated an encyclopedic command of rockabilly, bebop, and country-and-Western swing, and he rolled them together in a hybrid he called "redneck jazz." He recorded a handful of hard-to-find albums, including two for the Elektra label ("88 Elmira Street" in 1991 and "Cruisin' Deuces" in 1993), which eventually dropped him from its roster. Last October, after thirty years of low-rent gigs and celebrated failures, Gatton put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger. He was forty-nine.

On January 10-12, Tramps (51 West 21st Street) will host a three-night all-star benefit for the guitarist's family. (He left behind a wife and a fourteen-year-old daughter.) The first evening will feature a country theme, with the remaining nights given over to rock and blues. The list of performers is still being assembled, but there should be no shortage of star power. Les Paul plans to perform, as does former NRBQ guitarist Al Anderson, who once claimed that "all other guitar players are kindergarten compared to Danny." The final night will coincide with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction dinner, at the Waldorf Astoria, and it's not beyond the realm of possibility that members of the Allman Brothers, Neil Young, or even Jimmy Page might stop by to salute Danny Gatton and savor their own good fortune.

CONCERTS

NINE INCH NAILS—For the past five years, Trent Reznor, Nine Inch Nails' twenty-nine-year-old auteur—he is the band's songwriter, singer, and studio genius—has mounted a maniacal sonic assault on the minds of American youth. "Your parents should hate it," he told the Los Angeles *Times* recently. "If you think I worship Satan . . . great." But Nine Inch Nails offers more than mere din and depravity; ranting aside, Reznor is an audacious artist whose machine-music assemblages can be as hypnotic as they are terrifying. With Pop Will Eat Itself and the Jim Rose Circus. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Jan. 6 at 8.)

DJIVAN GASPARYAN—An Armenian musician who specializes in the duduk, an oboe-like reed instrument, in a rare stateside appearance. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Jan. 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

TRIBUTE TO RON CARTER—Notable jazz musicians, including Geri Allen, Ray Drummond, Christian McBride, and James Williams, gather to salute the great bassist, who will also perform a tune or two. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Jan. 9 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Hip-hop, jazz, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. Dec. 5: Funk with **HUNK** and **SPACEHOG**. Jan. 9: The acid-jazz combo **MARMALADE**.

BLARNEY STAR, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. Jan. 6: From Queens, by way of Paris, fiddler **PATRICK OURCEAU**, joined by flutist **LINDA HICKMAN** and guitarist **NANCY CONESCU**.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Jan. 6: **BUSTER POINDEXTER**. The comic troll known as **UNCLE FLOYD** drops in on Jan. 7.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—Jan. 6: **LIFE IN A BLENDER**. Jan. 10: **CHRIS WHITLEY** begins a five-night stand. Whitley's 1991 début, produced by Malcom Burn, a Daniel Lanois protégé, was a hauntingly ambient, blues-soaked gem. For his long-overdue sophomore effort, "Din of Ecstasy," which is scheduled for a March release, Whitley has a new co-producer, John Custer, who's best known for his work with obscure heavy-metal acts. Not surprisingly, the singer-songwriter is rocking harder, but he's still in touch with his atmospheric flair.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. Jan. 7: Singer-songwriter **BOBBY RADCLIFFE**.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. Jan. 5: **BOP APOCALYPSE**. Jan. 6: **THURST** and **THORN**. . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, singer **CHINA FORBES** plays on Jan. 6.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Jan. 4-7: Guitarist **JIMMY DAWKINS**.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Closed through Jan. 8. Jan. 9: **BABE THE BLUE OX** and **BEEKEEPER**.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Jan. 9: "The Honeysuckles," a live weekly soap opera. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

FLANNERY'S, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KAPTAIN BANANA, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Three drag queens and eight dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO**, a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Jan. 5: **ROOMFUL OF BLUES**. Jan. 10: The **FLYING NEUTRINOS**.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. Jan. 6: **HYPERACTIVE**. Jan. 7: **MAGNETIC FIELDS** and **RED KRAYOLA**.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Beyond the long bar, you'll find an exposed-brick room with a stage packed with some very hip rock acts. **JACK ASS** is in the house on Jan. 7. Jan. 10: The **LOW ROAD**.

MONKEY BAR, 60 E. 54th St. (838-2600)—Beyond the monkey murals, there's a bright see-and-be-seen dining arena that's perfect for committing high-profile indiscretions in a strapless gown. But the place to be is the dark and crowded bar up front, by the

LAURENT CILUFFO

The Monkey Bar.

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

grand piano, where the bar stools are shaped like plump olives. You perch on the pimiento. Dining.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the cha-cha. Jan. 7: **José Alberto.** Dining.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week it's another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Jan. 6: **Tabou Combo.** Tuesday nights, S.O.B.'s presents soul kitchen, an evening of seventies funk and R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius. Thursday nights belong to **Giant Step,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This broad, spacious, and agreeable club offers a consistent lineup of blues greats. Beginning Jan. 10: a three-night tribute to the guitarist Danny Gatton.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Jan. 7: The **Zen Tricksters.** Jan. 10: Hardcore with **Murphy's Law.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **Nancy La Mott** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, weekends to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Jan. 8: pianist and vocalist **Diane Schuur.** Guitarist **Garrison Fewell** leads a quartet on Jan. 9. **Phyllis Hyman** begins a six-night run on Jan. 10. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here. Through Jan. 8: a trio featuring **Philip Harper** (trumpet), **Norman Simmons** (piano), and **Steve Kirby** (bass). Dining.

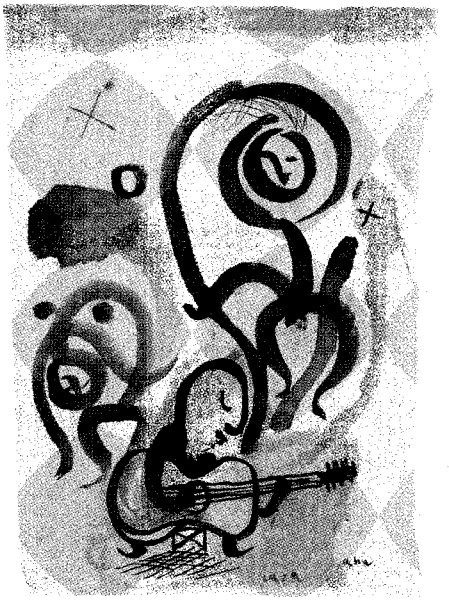
Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and—holy hotcakes, Batman—the amazing **Eartha Kitt.** Kitt is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. She inhabits her songs: when she sings "I Wanna Be Evil," you don't doubt for a second that she could spit tacks.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—One of the city's top jazz spots. Vocalist **Terry Blaine** is in through Jan. 8. **Shannon Gibbons** begins a weeklong engagement on Jan. 10. A few years back, her accomplished début record made it clear that Shannon Gibbons is a singer to remember. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul** leads a trio. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **Donald Johnston** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant



and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. From his pared-down drum kit to his anything-goes take on new jazz, **Leon Parker,** in through Jan. 7, is an original. The man is all rhythm, and his relentless, helium-light grooves offer the purest pleasure.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Through Jan. 7: **Ted Rosenthal** and **Rufus Reid.** Rosenthal, a historically inclined pianist, should bring a varied repertoire and abundant skills to this engagement. With Reid on bass, swing is a given.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 8: **William Parker,** the new jazz bassist in demand. A thinker as well as a bruising instrumentalist, he is a vital presence on the scene, and he has his own ideas about large-ensemble improvisation. **Robin Eubanks,** who's here with a quintet on Jan. 10, is one of the few trombonists to make a mark in the past decade. He's a blustery tailgater prone to tonal effusion, which he occasionally enhances eletronically. He's not averse to a touch of funk either. . . . ¶ Downstairs, in the AlterKnit Theatre, Jan. 6 belongs to **Charles Gayle.** Let freedom ring: Gayle rides a maelstrom of saxophone and piano improvisation, unencumbered by harmonic and rhythmic restraint. It's brave music for brave listeners.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **Gene Bertoncini** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Madison Room, 455 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (888-7000)—A plush gilt-and-marble piano room in the Palace Hotel. Tuesdays through Saturdays, **Peter Minturn** plays Gershwin, Porter, and other greats.

Metropolis, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—Vocalist **Sandy Stewart** is in Jan. 6-8. Tuesdays are given over to the **George Gee Orchestra,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The current bill of fare is "The Capote Caper," a ten-character musical about the friendship between Capote and the society columnist Dorris Lilly, featuring Larry Storch. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **Maureen McGovern** finishes up a monthlong run on Jan. 7. The **Manhattan Rhythm Kings** set up shop on Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band and Phoebe Légère; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**Kenny Barron** may have succeeded too well as the pianist of choice—ubiquity and being taken for granted go hand in hand. But whatever the drawbacks of popularity and consistency, Barron, here with a quintet through Jan. 8, turns every set into a lesson in unmannered, eloquent improvisation. On Jan. 10: pianist **Abdullah Ibrahim,** best known for his free-ranging improvisations, Ellingtonian lyricism, and deep funky vamps, begins a weeklong stint. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **Miles Evans** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The **Illinois Jacquet Big Band** is currently in the midst of a two-week run. Now in his seventies, the tenor saxophonist is a journeyman survivor whose career has arranged itself in a series of little peaks. Thus: his famous leaping solo on Lionel Hampton's recording of "Flying Home," set down when Jacquet was nineteen; his appearance in Gjon Mili's pioneering 1944 short film, "Jammin' the Blues"; his screeching, stomping tenor "battles" in the fifties, as a member of Jazz at the Philharmonic; his delightful attempts in the sixties to make the bassoon, of all instruments, bend to the winds of jazz improvisation; and, in 1983, his decision to put together a big band, which has become a smooth, highly popular Basie-like group, easy to dance to and most notable for the sumptuous sound of its leader's tenor. Indeed, it has been said that Jacquet's tone on a ballad is beautiful enough to hang on the wall.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Jan. 8: the **Ray Drummond** sextet. Drummond, New York's most reliable bassist, steps out with his own band. When you lay down the kind of shag carpet that Drummond instinctively does, anything sounds good on top. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Having made his mark as the pianist in Terence Blanchard's band, **Bruce Barth,** who's here on Jan. 5, enters the fray on his own. Barth is a young modernist forging his way on the path of neo-con heros like Herbie Hancock. Jan. 6-7: The talented transplanted Canadian guitarist **Peter Leitch** has loosened up lately. His rhythmic edge is now in league with his prodigious technique. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Jan. 8: Bassist **Michael Moore,** a man who can make his instrument sing, may be the most rhapsodic player in jazz. Fellow-bassist **Rufus Reid** isn't far behind him. Together, they'll play duets, and Moore will début his piano skills. Dining.

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ART

Chaos in Black-and-White

FRANZ KLINE was one of the most influential artists who ever worked in New York, yet he never really fit into the New York School as defined by art historians. While true Action painters such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning brought order out of chaos, Kline—particularly in his bold black-and-white abstractions—began with order and made it sublimely chaotic.

A new exhibition at the Whitney (through March 12) is devoted entirely to these monochromatic works. The solid curatorial idea behind the show, which originated at the Menil Collection in Houston, came as a reaction to previous retrospectives in which Kline's earlier, color works were included only to make the obvious point that they were inferior to the black-and-white canvases. The present show suggests that Kline was a pivotal figure, a bridge between the feverish Abstract Expressionists of the forties and the cool school that emerged in the late fifties and sixties. As if to drive the point home, the curators have hung a whole wall of Kline's ink drawings and oil sketches from the collection of Cy Twombly, who was one of the artist's colleagues at Black Mountain College in 1952. They reveal how carefully Kline rehearsed the apparently spontaneous gestures that turn up in his large paintings. Even a monumental exercise in anarchy like "Requiem" was plotted almost to the last stroke.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress." Through March 19. . . . ¶ The annual Christmas tree and Neapolitan Baroque crèche are on display for the holiday season. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ "Greek Gold." Forget embarrassment—this is a *humiliation* of riches, as splendid an exhibition of Classical jewelry as we're ever likely to see. Choice items from the Met and the British Museum have been augmented with lovely pieces from the northern coast of the Black Sea—a rare loan from the Hermitage. One massive Crimean cuff bracelet terminates in a pair of exquisitely carved sphinxes, eye to eye. Button-size plaques in the form of golden cockerels, also from the Crimea, lend a note of whimsy. An oak-wreath crown, with a bee and two cicadas nestling in its branches, is as airy and fine as sunlight itself. The workmanship throughout is so delicate that you may want to bring a magnifying glass. Through March 26. . . . ¶ "Thomas Eakins and the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Through Feb. 26. . . . ¶ "Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450." Anyone who thinks that illuminators took a back seat to the panel painters of the age should see this show, which brings together a group of little masterpieces that are in perfect condition. Their burnished gold and primary colors sparkle with the same intensity they had on the day the paint dried, because they've spent most of their lives between the covers of books. Through Feb. 26. . . . ¶ "Lucie Rie / Hans Coper: Masterworks by Two British Potters." (There's a concurrent exhibit of Rie's and Coper's work at Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.) . . . ¶ "Willem de Kooning: Paintings." This retrospective of the great Abstract Expressionist's masterworks includes "Marilyn Monroe" (1954), a powerful evocation of soft female sexuality. (A concurrent show of de Kooning's work is at Stone, 113 E. 90th St.) Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ "Ominous Hush: The Thunderstorm Paintings of Martin Johnson Heade." Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ "Origins of Impressionism" begins with paintings seen at the historic and influential Salon of 1859 and includes nudes, landscapes, and still-lifes. Through Jan. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Rem Koolhaas and the Place of Public Architecture" includes five architectural and three urban projects, in an exploration of the relationships between architecture and public space. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ "New Photography 10" features work by Shimon Attie, Abelardo Morell, Jorge Ribalta, and Michal Rovner. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "A Century of Artists Books." Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "Cy Twombly: A Retrospective." Nearly a hundred works, mostly paintings, by this heir to Abstract Expressionism. The show begins with Twombly's assemblage sculptures and ends with a new painting series, "The Four Seasons," done this year. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "An Eccentric Orbit: Video Art in Australia." (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68." Chairs, typewriters, a case of fabulous shoes, a car, a vacuum cleaner—even some painting and sculpture. Although this massive exhibition, which examines the way Italy reinvented itself after the Second World War, sprawls around the rotunda with no real logic, it's a potent reminder of the impact that Italian art and design have had in the past half century. And it's a fun crawl. Through Jan. 29. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." Through Jan. 8. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Franz Kline: Black & White, 1950-61." Through March 12. . . . ¶ "Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney: Printmakers' Patron." Through March 12. . . . ¶ "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." Through March 15. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

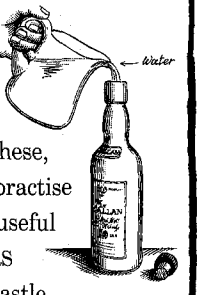
BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum." Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Dale Chihuly's "The Brooklyn Wall," an installation of blown glass, is on view in the lobby. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"An Enduring Legacy: The Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection." Every piece in this exquisite collection of Asian art coolly proclaims quality: a Korean stoneware jar is indescribably elegant; a copper sculpture from India—Krishna dancing over a vanquished demon, its serpentine tail echoing the god's heavenly form—is a little ode to joy. Through Jan. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; and Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Projected Images: 1972-94," an exhibit of slide projections and tape-and-slide installations by the Irish artist James Coleman. Starts Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Worlds Envisioned: Alighiero e Boetti and Frédéric Bruly Bouabré." . . . ¶ "Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." Done just before Warhol died in 1986, this series includes "Sixty Last Suppers," a huge silk-screen multiple

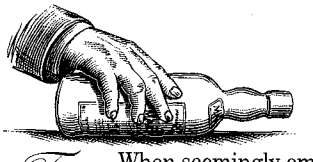
ECONOMY TIP(PLE)S.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS LATELY RECEIVED.



Tip 1. At times such as these, it behoves us all to practise frugality. Here is a useful tip sent to us by MRS DOORBARR of Newcastle under Lyme.

'When I give my husband his Macallan Malt Whisky, he likes to drink it neat, savouring its mellow sherry-oak tones and flavours. But when I announce that the bottle is empty, he asks "Have you thrown it out?" "Yes," I answer. "It's too good to waste," says he. "Get it out of the bin and swill in a little water. There's a dram to be *squeezed* from it yet."



Tip 2. When seemingly empty, lie The Macallan bottle on its side. A surprising amount can gather here. Tilt gently forward and ease the residue into your glass.

Tip 3. Rest exhausted bottles, with corks on, upside down, in old flowerpots or similar containers. Every 6 months or so, moisten tongue with cork to recall golden days.

Tip 4. Any other economy notion you may have will be welcomed at the Distillery. Those we publish will be rewarded with an Economy Size bottle (50 ml.) of 12 year old The Macallan to tip at will.

THE MACALLAN. THE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH.

Sole U.S.A. Distributor, Remy Amerique, Inc., NY, NY Scotch Whisky 86 Proof, 43% Alc./Vol. © 1994

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ART–Cont'd

in classic Warhol style, and another huge canvas in which bits and pieces of the Leonardo have been hand-drawn (with the aid of a projector) and then painted in flat patches of color, like a paint-by-numbers picture.... ¶ "Rest," by Franz West, an installation of twenty-seven couches on the center's roof. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"John Constable: Drawings, Watercolors, Oil Sketches, and Paintings from a Private Collection." Through Feb. 12. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6.)

Franz Kline, at the Whitney Museum.

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Jewish Life in Tsarist Russia: A World Rediscovered." Through March 5.... ¶ "Mario Cavaglieri: The Glittering Years, 1912-22" features thirty-six paintings, both interiors and portraits. Through Jan. 29. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and New Acquisitions." The word "great" is overused in the art world: it should be reserved for occasions like this one. The collection ranges freely from Mantegna to Jackson Pollock, with all the major schools represented; the French drawings are especially fine. Through Jan. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Recovering Popular Culture" includes a bodega exhibit, work by contemporary craftspeople, and a display pairing work from the permanent collection with that of contemporary artists. Through Jan. 8. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Decades before the advent of German Expressionism, the Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) was cooking up a strange brew of perfervid Romanticism and coloristic distortion. His early works—glumly realistic landscapes and scenes of farmers and other laborers—demonstrate the influence of Courbet, whereas in his later paintings he shows affinities with Edvard Munch, the Post-Impressionists, and the artists of the Vienna Secession. "Enchanted Boy II" (1894) captures Hodler's peculiar sensibility. In it, a barefoot youth with a vaguely medieval hairdo stands in a field of blue flowers. He looks like an extra from "Parsifal." Through Jan. 15.... ¶ "An Installation of Works by Paul Cadmus." Through Feb. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green—"Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief."... ¶ "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture."... ¶ "This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity." (Open daily, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Garbage! The History and Politics of Trash in New York City." Through Feb. 25.... ¶ "e.e. cummings @ 100: An Anniversary Exhibition." (Open Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy." Original recordings, a trumpet from the twenties, and work by Stuart Davis, Weegee, and Annie Leibovitz, among others, chronicle the life of America's most famous trumpeter. Through Jan. 8.... ¶ The museum's Panorama of the City of New York, conceived by Robert Moses and built by Raymond Lester & Associates, has been thoroughly updated, repaired, and swept clean (imagine). (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Herbert Ferber (1906-91)—Abstract metal sculptures from the fifties through the seventies. *Opens Jan. 7.* Through Feb. 4. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

H. C. Westermann (1922-81)—Fifteen wood sculptures, glass boxes, and bronzes from the sixties. Opens Jan. 5. Through Jan. 28. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

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Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-88)—Paintings with a black-and-white palette. Through Jan. 7. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jake Berthot—A dozen new abstract oils and four works on paper, all in a looser, scumbled style that is a departure for the artist. Through Jan. 11. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Fifty-five paintings from the early thirties to the late sixties. Through Jan. 21. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St.... ¶ A retrospective of the artist's work is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum.)

Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) / **Katsura Funakoshi**—An exhibit designed to show the monumentality of the artist's small works. / Sculptures and drawings by the Japanese figurative sculptor. Through Jan. 7. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Per Kirkeby—Paintings from the sixties by a Danish neo-expressionist. Through Jan. 14. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

James B. Moore—Representational still-lifes in oil on linen. Through Jan. 28. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen—Drawings and small-scale models of early large-scale collaborative sculptures. Through Jan. 7. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

Lucie Rie / Hans Coper (1920-81)—A comprehensive show of more than eighty masterworks by two important and influential studio potters, who had a mentor-protégé relationship. Through Jan. 7. (Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.... ¶ There's a concurrent exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum.)

Gretchen Dow Simpson—Recent paintings of Morocco and New England. Through Jan. 14. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St.)

David Smith (1906-65)—Fifteen bronze reliefs depicting wartime evils. Through Jan. 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Bill Traylor (1854-1947)—Thirty-one works by this self-taught artist, a former slave who did not start drawing until he was in his eighties. Through Jan. 14. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

Abraham Walkowitz (1878-1965)—More than forty watercolors and works on paper by the Paris School painter known for his impressionistic views of New York City and of the dancer Isadora Duncan. Through Jan. 7. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"ROSTA: Bolshevik Placards 1919-21"—A collection of handmade political posters from the Russian Telegraph Agency. Through Jan. 7. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

"The Music Box Project"—Music boxes designed by a wide range of contemporary artists, among them Jennifer Bolande, Kiki Smith, John Cale and Joseph Kosuth, and John Cage. Through Jan. 7. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays.)

"Drawn to Text: Comix Artists as Book Illustrators"—An international survey of the history of alternative comics that also shows how Robert Crumb, Javier Mariscal, Lorenzo Mattotti, Jacques Tardi, and Art Spiegelman approach book illustrations. Through Jan. 17. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Ann Messner—New sculptures in which objects made of cast iron or cast bronze are suspended in womblike bronze encasements. Opens Jan. 5. Through Feb. 4. (Maynes, 225 Lafayette St.)

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Brian Clarke—Paintings, architectural projects in stained glass, and mosaic works. Through Feb. 4. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Jean-Philippe Delhomme—A selection of colorful, impressionistic gouaches in the young Frenchman's New York-gallery début. Through Jan. 14. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Viola Frey—A survey of the artist's ceramic plates, from the early sixties to the present. Through Jan. 11. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Ellsworth Kelly—Most of these recent paintings are two-part reliefs in which each panel has been painted a different (often strikingly vibrant) color. The interaction of the simple, painted shapes produces a dazzling array of forms. Through Jan. 29. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi (1904-88)—Includes two pieces from 1985: "Beginnings," five large stones

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reminiscent of a Japanese garden, and "Ends," a Swedish-granite sculpture. Through Jan. 21. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

Collier Schorr—A two-part exhibition by a young artist preoccupied with sexuality, gender, and autobiography. In the front gallery she has installed a group of photographs of a pretty, pubescent boy, shirtless and in full makeup. In the rear, she has curated a small show of personal favorites, including works by Mark Morrisroe and Vito Acconci; a kind of self-invented art history, it alters a viewer's perceptions of Schorr's own photographs. Through Jan. 7. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Donald Sultan—A new hundred-drawing series titled "Wall Flowers." Through Jan. 28. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St.)

"Nature Morte"—A macabre exhibition of works by some well-known British artists on the slicing edge. Damien Hirst's glass case of forbidding medical equipment (and a cow's brain in a jar of formaldehyde) leaves you with the queasy feeling that you're the one about to be dissected. Mat Collishaw has re-created his "Bullet Hole," a huge (7 x 10 feet), glowing photomontage of a gaping wound. It's not a pretty sight. Through Jan. 7. (Bonakdar, 130 Prince St.)

"Another Dimension: Paintings by Sculptors"—A sculpture park of the mind. Featuring early work by Chamberlain, Di Suvero, Heizer, Hesse, Judd, LeWitt, two Smiths (David and Tony), and Smithson. Through Jan. 7. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

"Still Life"—A gathering of works by Charles Ray, Jeff Koons, and Fischli/Weiss, among others, that explores the current resurgence of sculptural realism. Through Jan. 14. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

"10 Years Parkett—63 Artists' Editions"—Works created for the quarterly art publication *Parkett* by an art-world A-list: Baselitz, Bourgeois, Clemente, Fischl, Holzer, Marden, Sherman, Turrell, and more. Through Jan. 28. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—Sculpture from the Cyril Humphris collection, on Jan. 10-11. (1334 York Ave. 606-7000.)

Christie's—Old Masters loom large at Christie's this week, beginning with a sale on Jan. 10 at Christie's East. (219 E. 67th St. 604-0404.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Hiroshi Sugimoto—New work in which the artist returns to photographing dioramas. These still-lifes are peopled with various prehistoric, political, royal, and notorious figures. Opens Jan. 7. Through Feb. 4. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

•

Andrew Bush—The artist pushes the not so proverbial envelope in these new works: all of the images *are* of envelopes, from stamp-size to life-size. The photographs have a shallow perspective, producing a subtle trompe-l'oeil effect, and they are displayed in either antique negative holders or printing frames. Through Jan. 7. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

Baron Adolf de Meyer (1869-1946) / **Toni Frissell** (1907-88)—A hundred and twenty vintage magazine and travel prints from throughout his career. / A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs by an artist who had tours of duty with *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, the Women's Army Corps and other war efforts, *Sports Illustrated*, and the Kennedy social constellation. Both shows through Feb. 12. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Robert Frank / Jun Morinaga—A show of recent work and selected images from Frank's classic "The Americans." / Twenty-five still-life studies of water. Both shows run through Jan. 14. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

William Klein—A retrospective of work by the celebrated fashion photographer. Through Feb. 26. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Jacques Henri Lartigue (1894-1986)—"Flights of Fancy," a show of eighty-four of the artist's photographs of dirigibles, hot-air balloons, bicycles with wings, seaplanes, and gliders. Through Jan. 20. (French Embassy, 972 Fifth Ave., at 78th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Alexander Liberman—Seventy-five color photographs, taken over a twenty-year period, of the Campidoglio, in Rome. Through Jan. 6. (The New York branch of the American Academy in Rome, at the Metropolitan Club, 1 E. 60th St. Open Mondays through Saturdays, noon to 4.)

Danny Lyon—A show of photographs spanning the artist's career, including unpublished, vintage prints from the "Bikeriders" series, and prints from "The Destruction of Lower Manhattan" and "Conversations with the Dead." Through Feb. 25. (Lowinsky, 578 Broadway.)

Abelardo Morell—Surreal, strikingly juxtaposed images made with an experimental camera. Through Jan. 14. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. . . . ¶ The artist's work can also be seen in the "New Photography 10" show at the Museum of Modern Art.)

Hanno Otten—The German photographer's first United States solo show includes large color Cibachromes from the "Kino" series, each of which takes its title from a movie or movie star. Through Jan. 21. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Herb Ritts—New works, taken on the photographer's recent journey to Africa. Most of these images—a stately couple, posed like a Masai version of "American Gothic," a black-maned lion, a single giraffe on the Serengeti Plain—set out to communicate majesty. Through Jan. 7. (Staley-Wise, 578 Broadway, a temporary space, up the street from the gallery's usual address.)

Paul Strand (1890-1976)—Vintage prints, with an emphasis on the artist's later work. Through Feb. 4. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

Bruce Weber—Photographs of dogs—all of the highly intelligent Newfoundland breed—taken in the United States, Canada, and Italy. Through Jan. 7. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Beauty & the Beast"—Karl Baden's images of the varied forms of life—feline, canine, and human—found at New England dog and cat shows. Through Jan. 21. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

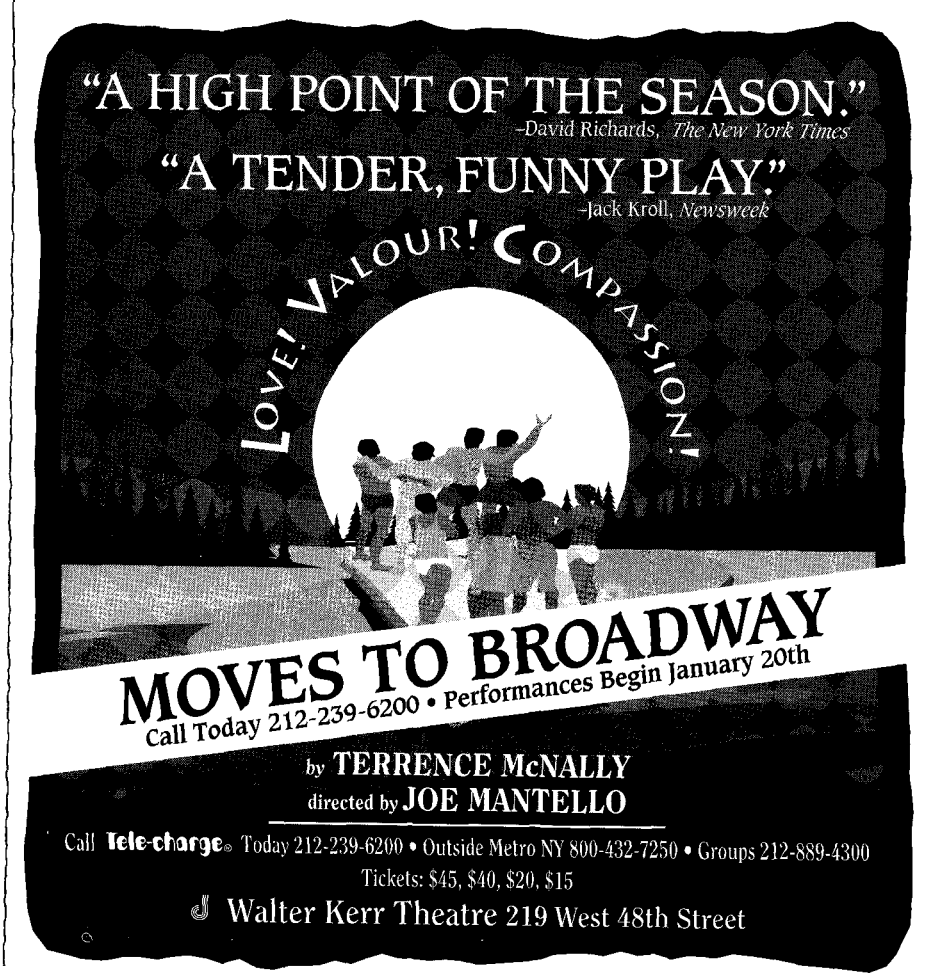
"Landmarks of New York"—Views of the city by Abbott, Coburn, Hine, Hofer, Kertész, Meyerowitz, and Ruzicka, among others. Through March 10. (Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St. Fourth floor. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

"Masterpieces of Fashion Photography"—A group show featuring work by Avedon, Beaton, Penn, Steichen, and others. Through Jan. 14. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

"Outside Fashion: Style & Subversion"—Mostly out-of-doors, dynamic shots by Munkacsi, Elgort, Klein, Sarah Moon, Newton, Turbeville, and others. Through Jan. 14. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

"Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it. . ."—The loveliest of precipitations, in city and country compositions, by a clutch of masters, including Werner Bischoff, Jessie Tarbox Beals, Harry Callahan, Weegee, and, of course, Kertész and Stieglitz. Through Jan. 14. (292 Gallery, 120 Wooster St.)

(See the museum listings for the photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.)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CLASSICAL MUSIC

Lamb's Chops

IN the ten years since Christopher Lamb became the New York Philharmonic's principal percussionist, he has rarely ventured from his home in the orchestra's back row. This week, however, when he solos in the première of Joseph Schwantner's Percussion Concerto, he'll view Avery Fisher Hall from several unaccustomed perspectives. During the first of the work's three movements, Lamb will sit in the center of the orchestra with three of his percussionist colleagues grouped behind him. For the middle movement, he'll move to the downstage-center spot traditionally occupied by concerto soloists. He'll return to his original position for the finale, but not before wandering about the stage playing an African *shekere*—a basketball-size gourd draped with a veil of wooden beads—to incite individual bursts of improvisation from the orchestra's players.

Even in more ordinary circumstances, percussionists must map out a complex choreography to reach the instrument they need when they need it without crashing into another percussionist. Performing Schwantner's concerto is a particularly challenging exercise in logistics. It requires the soloist to play on only about fifteen types of percussion instruments, which shows admirable restraint on the part of the composer, according to Lamb. "When approaching a project like this," he explains, "composers are tempted to let the number of instruments get out of hand. So when the work was still in the planning stage, I suggested to Schwantner that he pick his instruments carefully and write well for them, and not try to include everything but the kitchen sink." Lamb is delighted with the result, which he calls "a real crowd pleaser that has rhythmic drive, intense energy, and musical value that goes beyond just colorful effects."

Bass James Morris with the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000, and for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** with Galina Gorchakova, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Dwayne Croft; conducted by Daniele Gatti. (Jan. 4 at 8 and Jan. 7 at 1:30.) . . . With Ms. Gorchakova, Ms. White, Mr. Leech, and Wolfgang Brendel; Franz Vote. (Jan. 10 at 8.) . . . **DIE FLEDERMAUS,** with Pamela Coburn, Tracy Dahl, Hanna Schwarz, Stanford Olsen, Anthony Laciura, Hermann Prey, and Mr. Brendel; Hermann Michael. (Jan. 5 at 8.) . . . With Harolyn Blackwell replacing Ms. Dahl. (Jan. 7 at 8.) . . . **L'ELISIR D'AMORE,** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Jerry Hadley, Lucio Gallo, and Paul Plishka; Edoardo Müller. (Jan. 6 at 8.) . . . With Ms. Swenson, Mr. Olsen, Mark Oswald, and Mr. Plishka; Mr. Müller. (Jan. 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Final performances of "La Traviata." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Jan. 6-7 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 2:30.)

BRONX OPERA COMPANY—A fully staged production of Copland's "The Tender Land." (Lovinger Theatre, Lehman College, the Bronx. Jan. 7 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 2. Tickets at the door on the days of the performances.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. Jan. 5 at 6:45: Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, followed by a reception for the after-work set. . . . ¶ Jan. 6-7 at 8 and Jan. 10 at 7:30: Canzones for brass by Giovanni Gabrieli and Lassus, the première of Joseph Schwantner's Percussion Concerto (featuring Christopher Lamb), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5.

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Julius Rudel conducts Schumann's Concertstück for Four Horns (featuring Joseph Anderer, William Purvis, Stewart Rose, and Scott Temple), the second intermezzo from Wolf-Ferrari's "I Gioielli della Madonna," and Debussy's "Nocturnes" (with the women of the Concert Chorale of New York assisting in the last). Bass James Morris is the soloist in an aria from Donizetti's "L'ajo nell'imbarazzo," three songs by Strauss (in orchestral arrangements), Ibert's "Quatre Chansons de Don Quichotte," and excerpts from Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 7 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Performing the first suite of Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances," Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Bella Davidovich), and Schubert's Symphony No. 9. Gerard Schwarz conducts. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Jan. 7 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 3.)

RECITALS

TANA BAWDEN AND LORENZ MAYCHER—The pianist and the organist join for a program of solos and duets: piano works by Chopin, organ music by Sowerby and Dupré, and duos by Sowerby and Charles Callahan. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Jan. 4 at 6:30. Admission by contribution.)

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist Edward Auer performs Schubert's six "Moments Musicaux" (D. 780); Ik-Hwan Bae joins him for Franck's Violin Sonata; and cellist Denis Brott completes the ensemble for Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-Flat Major (Op. 70, No. 2). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 5 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 4.)

PATRICIA SCHUMAN—Soprano, singing Debussy's "Ariettes Oubliées," Ginastera's "Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas," and songs by Mozart, Britten, and Strauss (including his "Drei Lieder der Ophelia"); with pianist Craig Rutenberg. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 6 at 8.)

GUARNERI QUARTET—Playing string quartets by Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1) and Mendelssohn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 44, No. 3), as well as Mozart's D-Major Quintet (K. 593, with violist Daniel Phillips). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 7 at 8.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Choice listening from the Department of Keyboard Duos.

MARTHA ARGERICH AND ALEXANDRE RABINOVITCH, in two duo-piano/four-hand recitals (Teldec). Argerich, the quick-to-cancel Argentine who occupies the summit of modern pianism, seems to be growing less reluctant about displaying her artistry in public. Rumors of possible solo recitals abound, but for the time being she continues to play almost exclusively with a select circle of chamber-music colleagues. Among them is composer and pianist Rabinovitch, who partners Argerich splendidly on two new releases. Their Mozart disk—two sonatas (K. 381 and K. 521) and a set of variations (K. 501) for piano four-hands, plus a two-piano sonata (K. 448)—is not for the faint of heart; it bristles with big-boned, high-spirited athleticism. Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Haydn," F-Minor Two-Piano Sonata, and Waltzes (Op. 39)—all of which the composer revised into final versions for other forces—invite the players to range even more widely through their powerhouse of pianistic resources. If Brahms had heard performances as passionate as these, he might have stopped tinkering and let the works stand as the two-piano masterpieces they are.

BACH: "DIE KUNST DER FUGE"; harpsichordists Ton Koopman and Tini Mathot (Erato). Several years ago, musicologist Christoph Wolff put to rest the long-standing belief that "Die Kunst der Fuge" ("The Art of Fugue") was Bach's last major work. (The B-Minor Mass was.) It's a tough myth to erase, since the cycle's twenty movements—actually pieced together through the composer's final decade—offer such a valedictory summation of Baroque counterpoint, and since our romantic natures want to hold the Grim Reaper responsible for letting the collection's final fugue trickle off into silent incompletion. Various solutions have been proposed for the work's instrumentation (which Bach failed to clarify), but this husband-and-wife team's realization for two rich-toned harpsichords is as persuasive as any; it makes only moderate technical demands and obviates transpositions or awkward negotiations of intertwined passages. The duo's gift for combining rhythmic precision with extended melodic trajectories yields a disk that every Bach-lover should take for a spin.

VIVIANA GUZMÁN—Flutist, with harpsichordist Brian Farrell, in an all-Bach recital. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Jan. 8 at noon.)

DAWN UPSHAW—The soprano performs songs by Berg (his Four Songs, Op. 2, and "Seven Early Songs") and Debussy (his "Ariettes Oubliées," as well as several pieces he composed for Marie-Blanche Vasnier, the temporary object of his teen-age affections). Pianist James Levine assists. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Jan. 8 at 3.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES—Members of the orchestra play Eric Ewazen's Trio for Trumpet, Violin, and Piano; Hindemith's Clarinet Quintet; and Korngold's D-Major Piano Trio (with pianist Israela Margalit assisting). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Jan. 8 at 3.)

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Thuringian New Year—A concert of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century vocal works written in the Central German province of Thuringia for use at Christmas and New Year's. The composers range from the not entirely forgotten—Johann Michael Bach and Pachelbel—to the profoundly obscure: Nicolaus Niedt, Johann Topff, and poor Liebhold (first name and domicile unknown). Louise Basbas directs, and organist Harvey Burgett intersperses brief solo works by J. S. Bach. Presented by Music Before 1800 Productions. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Jan. 8 at 4.)

Ambrosia Trio—Performing piano trios by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 1, No. 2), Eric Ewazen, and Arensky (in D Minor). (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Jan. 8 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Liran Avni—The young Israeli pianist is joined by wind-playing colleagues in chamber music by C. P. E. Bach, J. S. Bach, and Milhaud, as well as in his own compositions. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat. Jan. 8 at 6 and 8.)

Heather Meyers and Duncan Hartman—The contralto and the baritone share a program of music by Wagner, Brahms, Schubert, and others; with pianist Yelena Kurdina. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 8 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 749-4561.)

FOR KIDS

(Accompanied by parents or other adults.)

"The Little Prince"—Theatreworks/USA presents a musical version of the story by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, in which a wise and tiny prince abandons his asteroid home to find what's really important in the universe. The music is by Jeffrey Lunden, and the book and lyrics are by Arthur Perlman. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 677-5959. Jan. 7 at 12:30 and Jan. 8 at 10:30 and 12:30. Through Jan. 15.)

"The Prop Shop"—When the members of the TADA! ensemble start rummaging around in their costume closet for old hats, they wind up singing favorite old songs instead. (TADA! Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 627-1732. Jan. 6 at 7:30 and Jan. 7-8 at 1 and 3. Through Jan. 29.)

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"—Menotti's opera about a boy's visit from the Three Kings, which opens on Three Kings' Day. The sets were designed by Jeff Koons. (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Avenue at 64th St. 838-0808. Jan. 6 at 7:30 and Jan. 7 at 2.)

"Motormouth"—Tape your own talk program, then watch the broadcast on CMOM-TV, the in-house station at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. For children aged six and older. (212 W. 83rd St. Jan. 7-8 from 11 to 4. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Amphibious Fairy Tales—Alice Eve Cohen will bring "The Balinese Frog Prince" and "The Maiden Who Loved a Trout" to the West End Gate Children's Theatre. Cohen blends movement, music, masks, and puppetry to tell these two stories drawn from myth. (2911 Broadway, at 113th St. 662-8830. Jan. 7 at 1:30.)

"The Magic Flute"—The Amato Opera Company presents an abbreviated version of Mozart's late masterpiece. Jessye Norman has called the piece—with its feathered sidekick and trusting prince, its fairy-tale transformations and charmed music—the perfect introduction to opera. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery. 228-8200. Jan. 7 at 11:30 and 2:30.)

And Don't Forget About—The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, with the Rockettes, of course, who appear variously as toy soldiers, rag dolls, and precision-dancing Santas. Through Jan. 8 (307-1000).

NEIL PACKER

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dubliner—When Roddy Doyle won the 1993 Booker Prize, for "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha," the onetime schoolteacher from Kilbarrack, North Dublin, became the toast of the Eloquent Isle. "Politicians were very keen to be photographed next to me," he told a radio interviewer not long ago. "There was even a time where I was asked to attend a reception for myself and a racehorse." His reception in New York has been almost as unbridled, and Doyle is bemused. "I'm not the Pope," he said last year, when someone at his Ireland House reading suggested he wave a little to the overflow crowd. (The movie-star reception may also be related to the films that were made from Doyle's earlier novels "The Commitments" and "The Snapper.") For this visit, Ireland House has reserved a larger hall, but arrive early anyway, for Doyle admirers will certainly fill it. (Schimmel Auditorium, Tisch Hall, New York University, 40 W. 4th St. Jan. 9 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Theatreworks/USA presents "The Little Prince."

You Can See Spring from Here—City farmers can delight in their dirty work, at an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York devoted to the community gardens and urban gardeners of Operation GreenThumb. Photographs by Katherine McGlynn—formal portraits taken last spring and summer in the improbable city-lot gardens—hang beside lengthy citations from the gardeners themselves; their chatty blend of gardening tips and reminiscence evokes the lushness of late summer. Practical gardeners might visit the museum's exhibit on Jan. 7 at 2, when Frances Mastrota of East Harlem's Pleasant Village garden will bring in rose petals, lavender, orrisroot, sweet annie, and other Victoriana for a workshop in potpourri making. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. No charge for the workshop beyond museum admission. The exhibition continues through May 1.)

Starmaking Machinery—Anyone looking to unload that last ream of head shots should stop by the ShowBiz Expo East, where more than a hundred and fifty exhibitors from the East Coast entertainment business will set up booths on Jan. 5-7. In addition to the technical exhibitions—on special effects, computer software, celluloid itself—there will be panel discussions by industry groups, including the Directors Guild, the Independent Features Project, and the Manhattan Association of Cabarets, as well as keynote sessions (Q & A with Stephen Sondheim, an address from producer Fred Zollo) and more leisurely round-table talks with composer-lyricists, playwrights, choreographers, stage managers, directors, et al. (New York Hilton, Sixth Ave. and 53rd St. Expo hours: Jan. 5, from 11 to 6; Jan. 6, from 10 to 6; and Jan. 7, from 10 to 5. Panels begin each morning at 9:30. For more information, call 1-800 854-3112.)

Double Bill—On Jan. 9, William Gaddis, the two-time National Book Award winner (in 1976, for "JR," and last year, for "A Frolic of His Own"), will appear at the 92nd Street Y with his card-catalogue neighbor, William Gass, for a reading and literary conversation. Gass, whose second novel, "The Tunnel," will be published by Knopf this month, has spoken of the confusion that often results from the similarity of their names; the *Times*, for example, once attributed Gaddis's third novel to Gass. Perhaps to forestall such confusion—or to increase it—the pair have taken to appearing together, and they should make for a rich and acerbic evening. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Jan. 9 at 8.)

Reading—Jan. 7 at 7:30: A reading of Elizabeth Bishop's poetry. Readers who call ahead may reserve the Bishop poem they would like to read. (Beatrix Books & Pix, 33-18 Broadway, Astoria, Queens. To choose a poem, call 1-718 204-5775.)

Walks—Jan. 7 at 11: SoHo Art Tours takes in the downtown galleries. For information, call 334-1912. . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at noon: Big Onion Walking Tours visits Ellis Island. For information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at noon: Rabbi Beryl Epstein leads a tour through the Hasidic community in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. For information, call 1-718 953-1000.

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Knicks—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Jan. 4 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, Jan. 8 at 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Jan. 10 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, Jan. 6 at 7:30.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL

For Whom the Ball Fumbles—As we go to press, the big surprise in postseason football isn't the unravelling of the Jets, or the Giants' pathetically slim playoff chances (if they do make the playoffs, they'll never get beyond the second round), but the tragic collapse of the Empire State's *other* football team, the Buffalo Bills. Sure, we won't have to endure the horror of a fifth consecutive Super Bowl pummelling, but we'll certainly miss the Bills' dysfunctional elegance, particularly the grave dignity of coach Marv Levy, the only team leader in professional sports with a penchant for quoting Ernest Hemingway.

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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Congress of Penguins—The Swiss director Hans-Ulrich Schlumpf travelled to Antarctica to shoot this surreal documentary about the environmental depredation of the planet. In German. Opening January 4. (Film Forum.)

House Guest—The standup comedian Sinbad stars as a con man who spends a holiday weekend hanging around Phil Hartman's suburban palace and impersonating his host's long-lost high-school friend. Directed by Randall Miller, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jody Savin. Opening January 6.

Safe Passage—Susan Sarandon plays a New Jersey mom with seven grown sons and an estranged husband (Sam Shepard); she faces a family crisis when it looks like one of her boys, who is stationed in the Middle East, may have been one of the victims of a barracks bombing. With Robert Sean Leonard, Sean Astin, Nick Stahl, Jason London, and Marcia Gay Harden. Directed by Robert Allan Ackerman. The screenplay, by Deena Goldstone, is based on a novel by Ellyn Bache. Opening January 6. (Village Theatre VII, Gotham Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 21.)

Cobb—The subject of Ron Shelton's brilliant new movie is Ty Cobb (played by Tommy Lee Jones), who was, by consensus, not only the greatest all-around baseball player who ever lived but also the meanest, the dirtiest, the most arrogant, and the most unscrupulous. Shelton's screenplay focusses on Cobb in 1960 and 1961—seventy-three years old, dying of cancer, and writing his memoirs. There isn't a trace of sentimentality in the picture. Cobb never goes soft on us, even as he nears death; he's a monster of mythic proportions, bellowing and thrashing and belching fire right to the end. Jones, in the spirit of the man he's playing, attacks the role with breathtaking ferocity. Together, he and Shelton create a grimly comic portrait of the artist as an old coot. Also with Robert Wuhl (as Cobb's unfortunate literary collaborator, Al Stump) and Lolita Davidovich.—T.R. (12/5/94) (Village East Cinemas and Gemini.)

Colonel Chabert—A veteran of the Napoleonic Wars (Gérard Depardieu) discovers that his avaricious wife (Fanny Ardant), who thought he was dead, has remarried and claimed his inheritance. Based on Balzac's 1832 novel and written by Jean Cosmos, Veronique Lagrange, and the director, Yves Angelo. In French. (Lincoln Square.)

Death and the Maiden—In an unnamed Latin-American country, a human-rights activist (Stuart Wilson) and his wife (Sigourney Weaver) encounter the doctor (Ben Kingsley) who she believes was responsible for her torture under a previous regime. Adapted from the 1992 drama by the Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman, who co-wrote the screenplay with Rafael Yglesias. Directed by Roman Polanski. (Village Theatre VII and Paris.)

Disclosure—In Barry Levinson's movie version of the Michael Crichton best-seller, Michael Douglas plays an executive whose livelihood is threatened by his sexually predatory new boss (Demi Moore). The presence of Douglas, who has made a career of being pursued by beautiful, dangerous women, turns this sexual-harassment thriller into instant camp. Once again, he's the poster boy for men's fear of aggressive women—the Clarissa Harlowe of male-backlash cinema. In the picture's floridly silly centerpiece scene, Moore jumps his bones in her new office and he struggles manfully, showing us the hairy chest beneath the hero's ripped bodice. Once that hilarious encounter is over, the movie gets ordinary in a hurry; it's tasteful, bland, and only mildly entertaining. —T.R. (12/19/94) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Drop Zone—Skydiving is still a novel action-movie ploy, and this Wesley Snipes take-the-money-and-jump vehicle boasts huge, elaborate helpings of it. But there's a sorry excuse for a story line: U.S. Marshal Snipes's revenge for the murder of his marshal brother (Malcolm-Jamal Warner). Violence, spectacle, and high-tech gadgetry go by in a slick blur. The better-than-usual supporting cast (including Gary Busey, Michael Jeter, and the disarmingly funny Kyle Secor) serves the same function as Snipes's red Mustang convertible and a pink rattletrap plane: it provides a dash of color. With Yancy Butler as the female lead; at her worst she both whines and glares. John Badham directed.—M.S. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Dumb and Dumber—Stipulated: Jim Carrey, as an easily distracted limo driver, and Jeff Daniels, as a dim dog groomer, are a first-rate pair of baggy-pants Gumps—they can double you over with a straggly line reading, a deadpan that betrays no mental pulse, or a semi-schizophrenic grin. But the screenplay for this deliberately over-the-top (under-the-bottom?) farce—about Carrey's unwitting retrieval of some ransom money and his effort to return it to his dream gal (Lauren Holly) in Aspen—doesn't pass muster as a string of moronic skits (studded with urine and fart jokes) or as a lampoon of buddy movies. The director, Peter Farrelly (who co-wrote with his brother Bobby Farrelly and Bennett Yellin), slips on his own comic puddles.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema; through Jan. 5.)

Federal Hill—Two best friends and small-time thugs (Anthony De Sando and Nicholas Turturro) clash when one of them falls in love with a university student (Libby Langdon). Written and directed by Michael Corrente. (Village Theatre VII and Columbus Circle.)

Immortal Beloved—What inspired Ludwig van Beethoven to write the "Ode to Joy" in his Ninth Symphony? That's just one of many questions posed by Bernard Rose's new biography of the composer. (The answer appears to be the memory of running away from child abuse. Of course.) The movie presumes, as movies will, that all creative outbursts are sparked by a crazy personal life, a supposition that allows Beethoven (Gary Oldman) to behave like a rock star; the film is only minutes old when he trashes a hotel room. Rose, taking his lead from "Amadeus," filters our view of the composer through a secondary figure—in this case Anton Schindler, Beethoven's secretary (Jeroen Krabbé, who looks more like Beethoven than Oldman does). But Schindler is a lump next to "Amadeus"'s Salieri, and with no tang of

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jealousy to sharpen its sense of genius, the film is flat. Sadly, Rose's approach has grown more stolid since his last film, "Candyman." Only once does he aim high, in a great kitsch-cosmic shot of the infant genius lost in a sea of stars. Valeria Golino, Isabella Rossellini, and the admirable Johanna Ter Steege play the three main women in Beethoven's life—the nominations for Best Supporting Muse. There's no surprise in the winner, nor in the choice of music—a roster of greatest hits.—A.L. (Lincoln Square.)

I.Q.—Half a great movie. For the first hour, Fred Schepisi's new comedy hits a high note of tolerant goofiness. Walter Matthau as Albert Einstein, Meg Ryan as the physicist's niece, Stephen Fry as her intended, Tim Robbins as her garage-monkey love interest: with a cast like that, it's not hard to keep the movie kicking along, and the blooming backdrop of nineteen-fifties Princeton adds to the sensation that these guys are living through an age of innocence and making the most of it. Schepisi fools around nicely with the contest between logic and love; Einstein and his cronies hatch a plan to bring Robbins and Ryan together, thus assisting an already benign universe. The jokes are never a blast; they feel subtle and syncopated, hitting you at quiet moments, staying away from the main rhythms of the plot—a wise move, because the plot (never strong to begin with) soon starts to crack. By the end, it's in total collapse, and the good mood dissolves.—A.L. (12/26/94-1/2/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Embassy.)

Ladybird, Ladybird—In the latest film from Ken Loach, an English single mother (Crissy Rock) in love with a Paraguayan refugee (Vladimir Vega) fights to win her children back from foster care. Written by Rona Munro. (Film Forum.)

The Last Seduction—A star turn from Linda Fiorentino as Bridget, a woman with a frozen wasteland where her moral landscape should be. In New York, she cheats her husband (Bill Pullman) out of their illegal earnings; upstate, she cheats Mike (Peter Berg) out of everything but his life. The movie has a hard forties snap to it—lust is a weapon and love is a letdown. Directed by John Dahl.—A.L. (10/24/94) (Village Theatre VII and Sutton.)

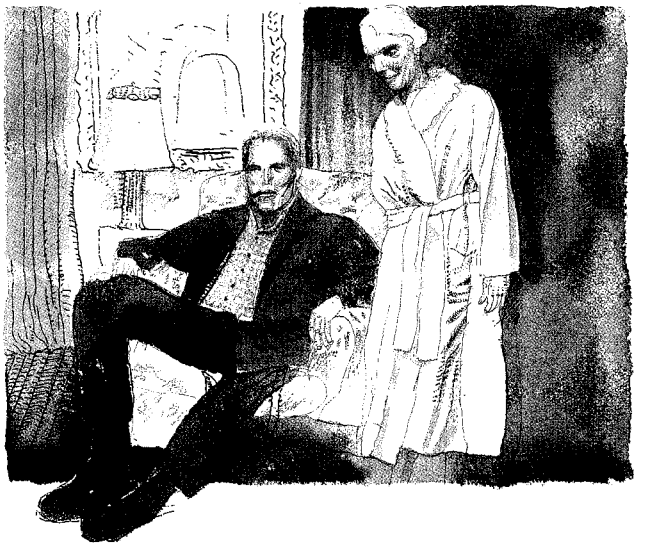
Legends of the Fall—A film set near the beginning of this century, about the relationships between a former cavalry officer (Anthony Hopkins) who has retreated to Montana, his three sons (Brad Pitt, Aidan Quinn, and Henry Thomas), and one son's fiancée (Julia Ormond). Edward Zwick directed. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Little Women—Gillian Armstrong's adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's novel, with Winona Ryder, Samantha Mathis, Trini Alvarado, Claire Danes, and Kirsten Dunst as the four girls (at various ages), and Susan Sarandon as their mother. Also with Gabriel Byrne and Eric Stolz. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

The Madness of King George—Nigel Hawthorne re-creates his celebrated turn as George III, the British monarch who lost the American colonies forever and his mind for a while. Helen Mirren, Rupert Everett, Amanda Donahoe, Rupert Graves, and Ian Holm are among those in his orbit. Alan Bennett adapted his 1991 play. Nicholas Hytner directed both versions. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Man of No Importance—Albert Finney's string of distinctive performances hits a knot with this poignant whimsy about a sexually repressed gay bus conductor in early-sixties Dublin. He regales his passengers with the words of Oscar Wilde, stages "Salome" in a church hall, and eventually struts out of the closet in a Wildean getup, complete with green carnation. The writer, Barry Devlin, and the director, Suri Krishnamma, have conceived their hero as such a gentle, eccentric dreamer that Finney can't locate a core; he relies on tortuous expressions of elfish desperation. With Tara Fitzgerald, Brenda Fricker, Michael Gambon, and Rufus Sewell.—M.S. (Eastside Playhouse and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle—A bad-mood movie: Dorothy Parker (Jennifer Jason Leigh), Robert Benchley (Campbell Scott), Alexander Woollcott (Tom McGowan), and the rest of the gang sit around getting sozzled at the Algonquin, barely managing to spit out the jokes. Technically, it's a sly and seamless piece of work; the director, Alan Rudolph, lulls you with his mirror shots, smoky closeups, and honeyed lighting, while Leigh goes deep into Mrs. Parker (which may not be all that deep) and pulls off one of those creepy, where-did-she-go routines to match her turn in "The Hudsucker Proxy." The movie, which Rudolph wrote with Randy Sue Coburn, is as smooth and deadening as a quart of old whiskey, and every bit as depressing as it was meant to be. But why do it at all? A film that set out to make the Round Table glitter again would have been ridiculous, but a film that chops the Round Table into little bits is hardly worth the bother.—A.L. (12/12/94) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)



Paul Newman and Jessica Tandy in "Nobody's Fool."

Mixed Nuts—Ingratiation meets absurdity in this wan comic tale about suicide hot-line workers whose luck changes on Christmas Eve. The director, Nora Ephron (who co-wrote with her sister Delia), formulates each incongruity and twist with artificial neatness. Steve Martin, as the Venice Beach hot line's embattled director, can't give the film a lift, not even when he does one of his specialty dance numbers with a depressed transvestite (Liev Schreiber). For every easy laugh Madeline Kahn rouses with her rendering of type-A hysteria, Adam Sandler elicits a groan with the amateur-songwriter bit he recycles from "Saturday Night Live." With Rita Wilson, Juliette Lewis, Anthony LaPaglia, Rob Reiner, and Robert Klein. Inspired by the French film "Le Père Noël Est une Ordure."—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Nell—The title character of Michael Apted's film is a young woman (played by Jodie Foster) who has been brought up in a remote cabin in the North Carolina woods, and who speaks a private language. The filmmakers set up an irresistible human mystery, but the closer they get to Nell the less interesting she becomes; by the time it's over, the picture is speaking a language no one could understand. The heroine, bathed in romantic moonlight, turns into a one-woman pagan idyll, while remaining stubbornly asexual. Foster's performance, full of trick vocal effects and stylized gestures, is abstract and ultimately baffling. As you watch her swaying and gyrating sensuously to the rhythms of nature, you can't help wondering how this backwoods hermit managed to pick up all that classy Martha Graham technique. With Liam Neeson, Natasha Richardson, and Richard Libertini.—T.R. (12/19/94) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Nobody's Fool—Robert Benton directs Paul Newman in a film about life in a rural New York town. With Bruce Willis, Melanie Griffith, and Jessica Tandy. Written by Benton, based on Richard Russo's 1993 novel. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and Lincoln Square.)

Queen Margot—A historical drama, set in sixteenth-century France, about the marriage of Marguerite of Valois (Isabelle Adjani), the Catholic sister of Charles IX (Jean-Hugues Anglade), to the Protestant Henri of Navarre (Daniel Auteuil)—a wedding that preceded, by only a few days, the deaths of thousands of Protestants in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. Virna Lisi plays Catherine de Medici. Directed by Patrice Chereau, who co-wrote the script with Daniele Thompson, from the novel by Dumas *père*. In French. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema II.)

Ready to Wear (Prêt-à-Porter)—Robert Altman turns his roving eye to the world of fashion. It should have been a perfect match of style and subject, but Altman seems to have decided in advance that the subject was barely worth his attention. Set amid the anarchy of Paris fashion week, the movie is so well oiled that it never snags on anything substantial, slipping from one micro-plot to the next without pausing to wonder where the center of interest lies. As in "Short Cuts," the cast is huge, but this ensemble is never put to the test. Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni are jokey and touching as long-parted paramours, but fine actors like Forest Whitaker and Lauren Bacall are wasted resources. A film that confines Tim Robbins and Julia Roberts to the bedroom is squandering its comic energies; when Roberts finally gets dressed, her smile—and her suit—remind you of what could have been.—A.L. (12/26/94-1/2/95) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Cinema I, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Red—The last and best film in the trilogy that began with the baffling "Blue" and continued with the more acrid "White"; here all the skills of the director, Krzysztof Kieślowski, are brought into melancholy play. Blind chance or benign fate (according to your point of view) brings Valentine (Irène Jacob), a young model living alone in Geneva, into contact with a retired judge (Jean-Louis Trintignant) with a predilection for eavesdropping on telephone conversations. In time Valentine's repulsion shades into curiosity, and from there into affection. And the movie itself shades from coldness and contrivance into a story as touching and mysterious as anything Kieślowski has ever made. At the end, Kieślowski assumes the mantle of Prospero, magically (and rather absurdly) assembling the trilogy's main players, and it's hard to begrudge the master his final flourish. In French.—A.L. (11/28/94) (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Richie Rich—Working-class pals learn that the wealthiest boy in creation is normal and lovable, not spoiled rotten—something the star, Macaulay Culkin, must want to communicate to his fans. Donald Petrie's prop-heavy version of the comic book depicts

ALAN E. COBER

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CHANNEL SURFING

Comeback Kidders

THE sitcom wizards at CBS keep trying to grab the last spark of fading stars, only to get burned. In 1991, the network paired Farrah Fawcett and Ryan O'Neal as squabbling sportscasters in the screwball comedy "Good Sports." O'Neal's neediness made viewers nervous—he played every scene as if hoping for a reprieve. In 1993, Faye Dunaway was defrosted in order to make bedroom eyes at Robert Urich's belt buckle in "It Had to Be You." She was downright scary. And earlier this season, CBS, unfathomably, gave Dudley Moore another shot at redemption with "Daddy's Girls," which the New York *Post* called the fall season's worst.

Cybill Shepherd is the latest comeback kid trying to beat the CBS curse. The beauty-pageant queen turned actress ("The Last Picture Show" and TV's "Moonlighting") stars in "Cybill" (Mondays), a self-referential sitcom about a mature beauty being pushed out of show biz by plastic bimbos. Although Cybill's career has been reduced to cheesy parts, she prides herself on being a well-maintained, sporty classic (symbolized by the car she drives, a 1964 red convertible). Her extended family includes two ex-husbands who hang around waiting for some decent dialogue, and a pale, sulky daughter who can't seem to decide whether to pledge herself to Prozac Nation or to Satan. The show's only morale-booster is Christine Baranski, who plays Cybill's best friend, a Betty Ford dropout who shuffles around her alimony palace in a pink robe and sips booze from a barbell-shaped bottle. Baranski manages to turn this brazen, debauched ditz into a one-woman American version of "Absolutely Fabulous." Shepherd is a trouper, but Baranski (who's tested her stuff on the New York stage) has the killer technique. She does more with a squinch of her eyes than Cybill does barrelling full-speed ahead.

Also new from CBS: "Double Rush" (Wednesdays), a busy sitcom about bicycle messengers that's a cross between "Taxi" and "Cheers." It stars Robert Pastorelli, who was Murphy Brown's live-in housepainter, and who is looking more like Wolfman Jack all the time. Awhoo!

—JAMES WOLCOTT

CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

Richie in turn as a poor little rich boy and a kiddie James Bond. He has to outmaneuver a greedy underling (John Larroquette) who almost kills Richie's benevolent Dad (Edward Herrmann) and Mom (Christine Ebersole) in an attempt to grab the family's multinational corporation. As they did in "The Flintstones," the screenwriters, Tom S. Parker and Jim Jennewein, cram spoofs of corporate politics into live-action cartoons with dispiriting advertising tie-ins: Richie wins over his buddies by treating them at his in-house McDonald's.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

RUDYARD KIPLING'S THE JUNGLE BOOK—Mowgli (Jason Scott Lee) isn't a wolf boy any longer. He's a cliché Lord of the Jungle in an opulent action movie that resembles the Indiana Jones series. True to anti-imperialist P.C., Mowgli's antagonist is now a corrupt British officer (Cary Elwes). The director, Stephen Sommers, and his co-writers, Ronald Yanover and Mark D. Geldman, knock the mythic underpinnings out from under this classic. They adulterate Kipling's vision of growing up quick and strong in a sensuous, perilous environment—they transform his Law of the Jungle into Disney's Circle of Life. The resolute human cast includes Sam Neill, John Cleese, and Lena Headey (the love interest); the scene-stealers are Casey (Baloo, the bear), Shadow (Bagheera, the panther), and Bombay (Shere Khan, the tiger). The 1942 Korda brothers version had more wit, zest, and magic.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

THE SANTA CLAUSE—Tim Allen's talent for dry regular-guyness fails to kindle Disney's sappy big-screen Yule log. Allen plays a toy-company sales whiz who startles Santa—fatally—on Christmas Eve and becomes the new Kris Kringle. The handling of Santa myths is both sassy and sanctimonious, just as the subplot about Allen's son (Eric Lloyd) and ex-wife (Wendy Crewson) and his ex-wife's shrink husband (Judge Reinhold) both mocks and respects "inner child" psychodrivel. John Pasquin directed.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy.)

SPEECHLESS—Tracy-Hepburn meets Carville-Matalin. It should have made a great movie, but the director, Ron Underwood, and his writer, Robert King, have softened the blows that are needed for a battle of wits. Michael Keaton is a speechwriter working on a Republican senate campaign in New Mexico, Geena Davis his opposite number in the Democratic camp. They fall in love and then start hating each other—or so the movie would like us to believe. In fact, after one round of bitchery the tension dies, and they go back to helping each other out like best buddies. Davis dresses like a bossy schoolgirl, and, to some extent, behaves like one; she gives us a smart, winning portrait of principles under siege, but she needs something smoother to play off than Keaton's nervous stop-and-go style. (Christopher Reeve is much funnier as a hunk hack—basically, a huge grin and a pair of shorts—named Baghdad Bob). The film loses its way long before the end, and the climactic declaration of love is embarrassing and pretty unlikely. These are *journalists*, for heaven's sake.—A.L. (19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

STREET FIGHTER—Jean-Claude Van Damme (as the leader of a unit of underground commandos) versus Raul Julia (as the megalomaniac warlord they're up against). The screenplay is by Steven E. de Souza, who also wrote "Die Hard" and "Die Hard 2," and who here makes his début as a director. (Village East Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

BORN TO WIN (1971)—An unjustly neglected film. Maybe the mixture of moods (comedy and horror) frightened off the producers; they didn't open it, they just let it out. George Segal gives his most prodigious and imaginative performance as a hipster junkie who is so giddy that he really digs the hustling lower depths he inhabits. The film isn't totally satisfying, but even at its most ragged, it holds one's interest. With Karen Black, Jay Fletcher, Paula Prentiss, and Hector Elizondo. Directed by Ivan Passer, from David Scott Milton's screenplay.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 6-7.)

GEORDIE (1956)—A runty little bit of a boy, the son of a Scottish gamekeeper, sees an ad for a bodybuilding course: "Are you undersized? Let me make a man of you!" When we next see the boy, ten years of sweat and exercise have turned him into a strapping six feet six inches of solid muscle—muscle even between his ears. He's a dour giant obsessed with his giantism. Bill Travers (after a course of muscle development and a steak diet) was assigned the role of Geordie, who takes up hammer-throwing and meets his match at the Olympics: a six-foot woman shot-putter. Alastair Sim turns up as the Laird, and the Scottish Highlands provide the background for this gentle satire of man's mania for bodybuilding. Too gentle. In its period this was one of the most popular English imports, though it really isn't very lively. The idea is so promising that you keep expecting more pleasure than you get. Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder wrote the script; Launder, who seems as muscle-bound as the hero, directed—he's slow and heavy.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 9.)

I SEE A DARK STRANGER (1945)—A romantic suspense comedy, with Deborah Kerr as an Irish girl, fed on anti-British folklore by her father. On her twenty-first birthday she goes off to Dublin, hoping to join the I.R.A., but becomes involved in a different kind of anti-British activity: spying for the Nazis. Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, who produced, with Launder also directing, had written Hitchcock's "The Lady Vanishes" and Carol Reed's "Night Train to Munich" and other witty thrillers; this script, which they wrote with Wolfgang Wilhelm, has the same basic ingredients. But without a Hitchcock or a Carol Reed to supply style and terror, the results seem too consciously clever. The musical score and the attitudes are a little arch, a little condescending. It's pleasant enough, but unexciting; its only spark is from Kerr, who's fresh and lovely, with full pouty young lips. The hero, Trevor Howard, has nothing to do but follow her around, adoringly; Raymond Huntley plays the Nazi who recruits her.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 7.)

PORTRAIT OF JASON (1967)—A monologue film, in which a black homosexual hustler and sometime entertainer (Jason Holliday) talks directly to Shirley Clarke's camera crew. The idea is that, faced with the camera, his defenses will be stripped away and the "inner" man revealed—an idea both sadistic and naïve.—P.K. (Whitney Museum; Jan. 7.)

STREAMERS (1983)—Robert Altman's second filmed theatre piece was a plummeting comedown from his 1982 triumph, "Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean." Here Altman can't transcend David Rabe's turgidity. The playwright conveys the nervous exhaustion and communal claustrophobia of Army Airborne men awaiting orders. Some, like the middle-of-the-road Roger (David Alan Grier) and the upright Midwesterner Billy (Matthew Modine), forestall their anxiety over being sent to Vietnam by burying themselves in routine. Others, like the effeminate New York intellectual Richie (Mitchell Lichtenstein), try to retreat into pre-military habits. But when the question of whether Richie is gay tears the

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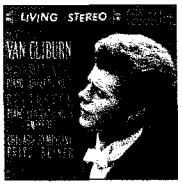

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barracks apart, the play devolves into violent melodramatic allegory.—M.S. (Whitney Museum; Jan. 4.)

Taxi Driver (1976)—Robert De Niro is in almost every frame of Martin Scorsese's feverish, horrifyingly funny movie about a lonely New York cabdriver. De Niro's inflamed, brimming eyes are the focal point of the compositions. He's Travis Bickle, an outsider who can't find any point of entry into human society. He drives nights because he can't sleep anyway; surrounded by the night world of the uprooted—whores, pimps, transients—he hates New York with a Biblical fury, and its filth and smut obsess him. This ferociously powerful film is like a raw, tabloid version of Notes from Underground. Scorsese achieves the quality of trance in some scenes, and the whole movie has a sense of vertigo. The cinematographer, Michael Chapman, gives the street life a seamy, rich pulpiness. —P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 6-7.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema 1, Cinema 11, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Thalia, B'way at 95th (316-4962).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia 1 and 11, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)—"Barcelona" (Whit Stillman). . . . "The Specialist" (Luis Llosa). . . . "Love Affair" (Glenn Gordon Canon). . . . "Miracle on 34th Street" (Les Mayfield). . . . "Eat Drink Man Woman" (Ang Lee; in Mandarin). . . . "Timecop" (Peter Hyams). . . . "Little Giants" (Duwayne Durhan).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Jan. 4: "Shadows" (1961, John Cassavetes) and "Crime in the Streets" (1956, Donald Siegel). . . . ¶ Jan. 5: "The Killer That Stalked New York" (1950, Earl McEvoy) and "Guilty Bystander" (1950, Joseph Lerner). . . . ¶ Jan. 6-7: "Taxi Driver" (†) and "Born to Win" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 8-9: "The Garment Jungle" (1957, Vincent Sherman and Robert Aldrich) and "Middle of the Night" (1959, Delbert Mann). . . . ¶ Jan. 10: "Street of Chance" (1942, Jack Hively), "Dr. Broadway" (1942, Anthony Mann), and "C-Man" (1949, Joseph Lerner).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-1717)—"The Buddha of Suburbia" (Robert Michell).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through Jan. 5: "Temptation of a Monk" (Clara Law; in Mandarin). . . . ¶ From Jan. 6: "Fast Trip, Long Drop" (Gregg Bordowitz) and "The Darker Side of Black" (Issac Julien).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of recent films from Germany, all in German. Jan. 5 at 2:30: A program of five short films. . . . Jan. 5 at 6: "Farewell to Agnes" (1994, Michael Gwisdek). . . . Jan. 5 at 8: "One of My Oldest Friends" (1994, Rainer Kaufman). . . . Jan. 6 at 2:30 and Jan. 8 at 5: "Worldmaster" (1993, Zorun Solomun). . . . Jan. 6 at 6: "Leni" (1994, Leo Hiemer). . . . Jan. 6 at 8: "Marie's Song" (1994, Niko Brücher). . . . Jan. 7 at 2 and Jan. 9 at 6: "Forced Labor in Germany" (1993, Wolfgang Bergmann). . . . Jan. 7 at 5 and Jan. 10 at 2:30: "Berlin in Berlin" (1993, Sinan Çetin). . . . Jan. 8 at 2: "Bye Bye America" (1994, Jan Schütte). . . . Jan. 9 at 2:30 and Jan. 10 at 6: "Up & Down" (1994, Joseph Orr). . . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 3 and 6: "Twitch and Shout" (1994, Laurel Chitern). . . . ¶ A program of films by Josef von Sternberg. Jan. 6 at 3: "Macao" (1952). . . . Jan. 6 at 6: "Jet Pilot" (1951). . . . Jan. 6 at 8: "The Saga of Anatahan" (1953). . . . ¶ A program of films written and/or directed by Sidney Gilliat. Jan. 7 at 2: "The Lady Vanishes" (1938, Alfred Hitchcock). . . . Jan. 7 at 5: "I See a Dark Stranger" (†). . . . Jan. 8 at 2: "The Rake's Progress" (1945). . . . Jan. 8 at 5: "Inspector Hornleigh on Holiday" (1939, Walter Forde). . . . Jan. 9 at 3: "Geordie" (†). . . . Jan. 10 at 3: "The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan" (1952). . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 6:30: A program of films by Abraham Ravett, who will be present.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Jan. 4-5 at 2, 4:15, 6:30, and 8:45: "Treasure Island" (1991, Raul Ruiz; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud. . . . ¶ Jan. 6-10 at 1 and 6:30: "The Kingdom" (1994, Lars von Trier).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films and videos by, or about, black American males. Jan. 4 at noon: "Streamers" (†). . . . Jan. 4 at 3:30: "Noir et Blanc" (1989, Claire Devers). . . . Jan. 5 at 2: "Robert Mapplethorpe" (1988, Nigel Finch) and three short films. . . . Jan. 5 at 5: "Tongues Untied" (1989, Marlon Riggs). . . . Jan. 5 at 6:30: "Time Out: The Truth About HIV, AIDS and You" (1992, Malcolm-Jamal Warner) and two short films. . . . Jan. 6 at noon: "Paris Is Burning" (1990, Jennie Livingston). . . . Jan. 6 at 3:30: "Next Stop, Greenwich Village" (1976, Paul Mazursky). . . . Jan. 7 at noon: "Portrait of Jason" (†). . . . Jan. 7 at 3:30: "The Boys in the Band" (1970, William Friedkin). . . . Jan. 8 at noon: "Can't Stop the Music" (1980, Nancy Walker). . . . Jan. 8 at 3:30: "Car Wash" (1976, Michael Schultz).

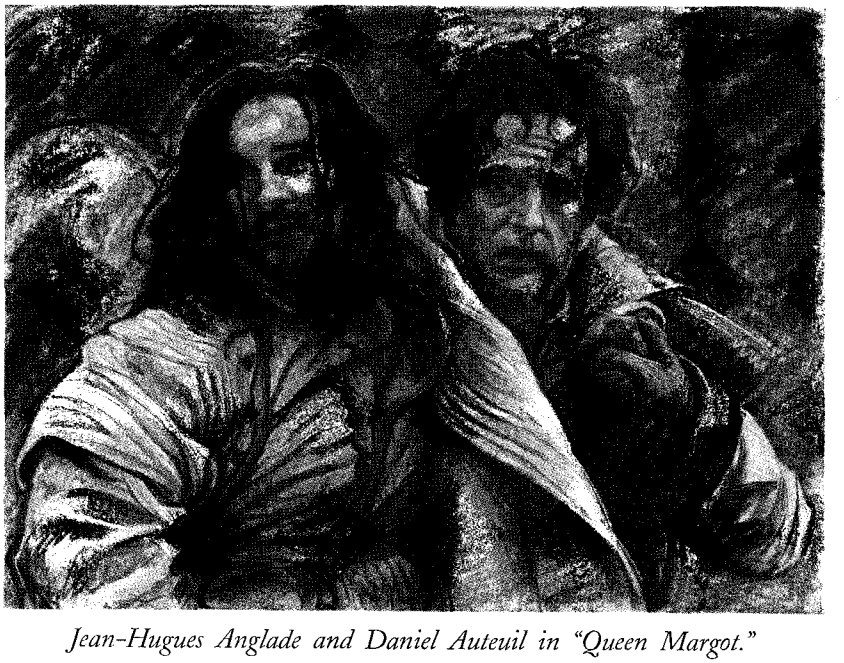
Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Jan. 22: "Barbra Streisand and Other Musical Instruments" (1973). (Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 2.)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A two-day program of films by Charles Burnett. Jan. 7 at 2: "Killer of Sheep" (1977). . . . Jan. 7 at 4: Mr. Burnett will discuss his career and show scenes from his new film, "The Glass Shield." . . . Jan. 8 at 2: "My Brother's Wedding" (1983). . . . Jan. 8 at 5: "To Sleep with Anger" (1990).

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Jan. 5 at 2:30: "Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" (1993, Neil Goodwin). . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at noon: "West Side Story" (1961, Robert Wise), with Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Jan. 8 at 7, the feature will be "The Violent Years" (1956, William M. Morgan). The script of this film was written by Ed Wood, Jr.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 10 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9:30: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1990, Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French), with Gérard Depardieu.



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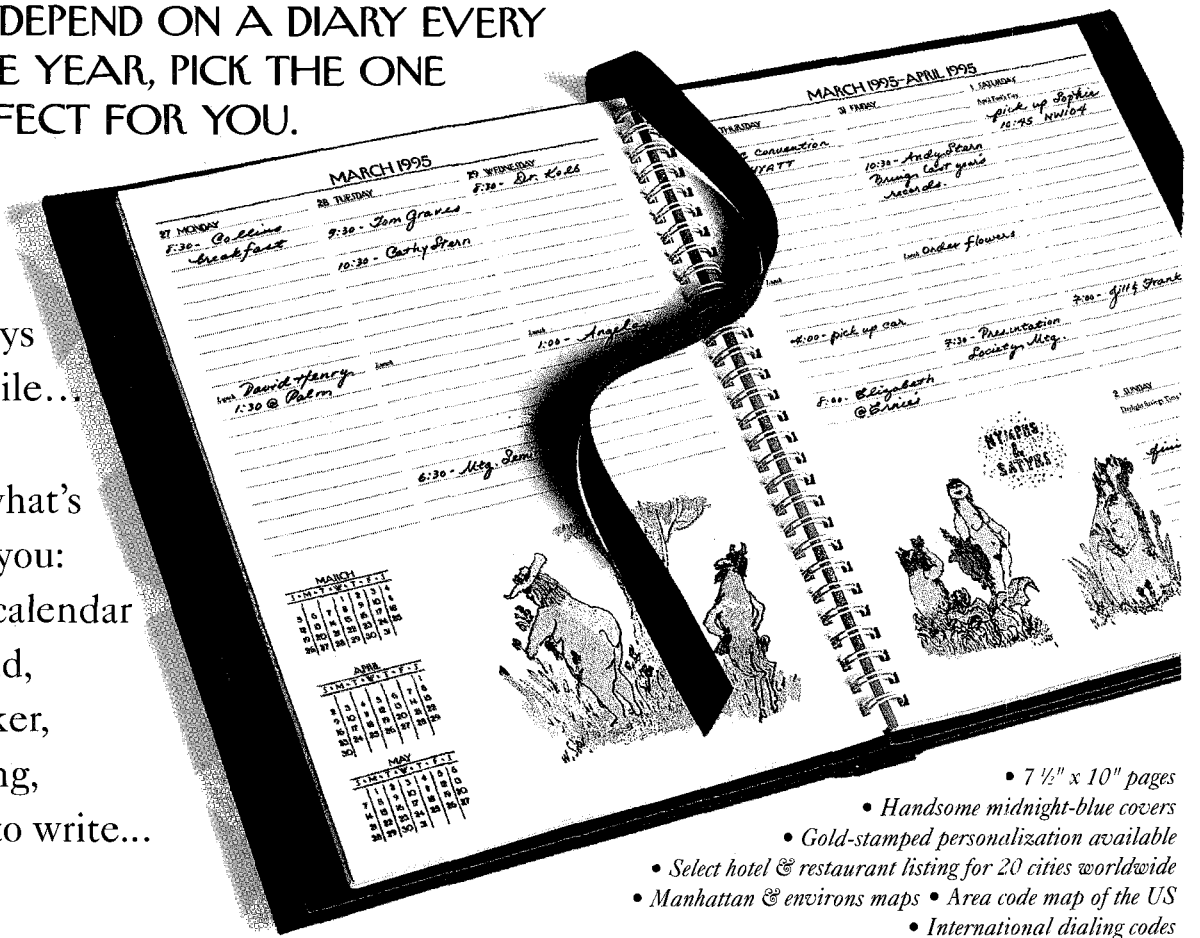

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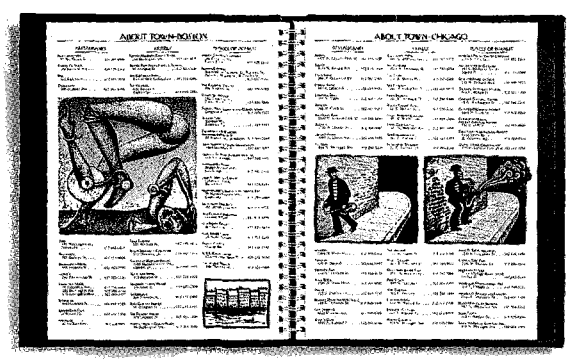

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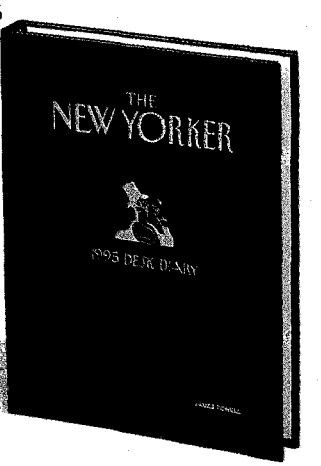

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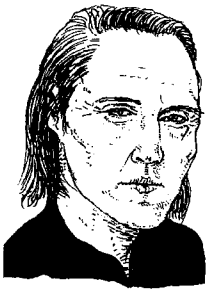
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

WALKEN ON THE WILD SIDE



SOME male actors wear their mystery heavily, as if destiny had them in a harness—or a headlock. Compared with Mickey Rourke and other such mumblers, Christopher Walken wears his mystery lightly, releasing his words like whims. He amuses himself immensely.

With his coquettish cheekbones and tapered wrists, Walken once possessed the fragile aura of a fallen angel, like Goethe's Young Werther, too sensitive for this world. Early in his career, he made fun of his morbid inclinations, playing the brother in "Annie Hall" who hears the siren call of suicide. In "The Deer Hunter," he was a Vietnam vet about to dissolve in his own night sweats of dread.

As Walken has matured, he has proved anything but a will-o'-the-wisp. He trained as a dancer, and he has a dancer's durability. His languor and pounce have led critics to compare him to a jungle cat, and as he has grown older a sensual corruption, a moral corrosion, has crept into his smile. From "King of New York" to "True Romance" and "Pulp Fiction," Walken has made a style statement out of dressing like an educated pimp and handling a gun as if it were an elegant extension of his mind. He dictates death like a memo, shooting people as if punctuating a paragraph.

Perhaps the reason Walken still moves so fluidly on the screen is that he has continued to work on the stage. He has a long-standing association with the New York Shakespeare Festival, having appeared in "Othello," "Macbeth," and as the lead in "Coriolanus." This week, he opens at the Public Theatre, starring in "Him," a play he also wrote. "Him" (the Godlike note of awe is intentional) is an ambitiously flaky spoof of pop religion—a series of riffs on the posthumous life and legend of Elvis Presley as he loafs around in Limbo, modelling what looks like the latest in Vegas loungewear. This halfway house in the Hereafter is haunted by Elvis look-alikes, including Elvis's stillborn twin brother.

As for Walken's performance—well, as the King himself might say, He's real gone, man. That cat is up the tree. Walken has always had an androgynous aspect (Pauline Kael once compared him to Falconetti in "The Passion of Joan of Arc"), which he spoofs here by getting into a truckstop-waitress uniform, and taking his final bow in beefy drag. Walken's writing is as offhand and evocative as his acting—it has its own weird wavelength, exclusive yet accessible. At times, he shrugs after a spate of words, as if to say, "Wow, who knew I could speak so well?" He appears delighted by his own careless gifts—his whims come back to him and nestle in his head. It's a superhero's head, dynamic and bold, and when he dons Elvis's cape, he seems ready to take flight.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

TONY BLANKLEY, AT ONE WITH NEWT

THE battle lines in Washington these days are clear. On one side are the righteous legions of Newt Gingrich and the new Republican Congress. On the other are, as Gingrich might say, those McGovernik enemies of normal Americans, the forces of the liberal media élite. In the weeks since the November elections, the Washington *Post's* cartoonist Herblock, resurrecting the imagery of Nixon and McCarthy, drew the incoming Speaker of the House as a muck-dripping night creature crawling out from the sewer. Gingrich has also graced the cover of *Newsweek* as the Gingrich who stole Christmas and the cover of *Time* as Uncle Scrooge, a scowling Dickensian apparition brandishing the broken crutch of (presumably) Tiny Tim.

Gingrich, for his part, is more unblushingly open in his dislike for the liberalmediaélite (it is properly one word, like rightwingzealot or Presidentialhopeful) than any national politician since Nixon. (Or at least he pretends to be.) When Gingrich speaks of the media establishment of Washington—or to it—he lights up with a combative contempt so plain and so strong that you wonder, watching him, if he might actually one day poke a reporter

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in the eye, as the late, semi-nutty General Edwin Walker did after a Senate hearing one spring day in 1962.

On a recent Sunday, in the rich and lovely Washington suburb of Great Falls, Virginia, at the eleven-acre spread of a congressional press secretary, there was a party that might have been calculated to bring an eye-poking desire surging up in the Gingrich bosom. As white-jacketed waiters circulated with silver trays of champagne, reporters of the establishment press—the *Times* was there, and the *Post*, and ABC News, to name a few—chatted and chattered among themselves. The scene was just the sort of thing that, taped and set to a suitable narration, Professor Gingrich might use in a video lecture on What Is Wrong with Washington: a bunch of freeloading liberalmediaélite types, living off the fat of this overtaxed land in their own insular, self-satisfied world. Which is a little odd, since the host of the party was Washington's new media darling—Newt Gingrich's press secretary. It's true—Tony Blankley, the flack for the man who loathes the media and whom the media love to loathe, likes reporters, and they like him.

The incongruity of Blankley is a minor marvel in Washington history. For better and for worse, press secretaries tend to reflect the styles of their masters. Ron Ziegler was perfectly right for Richard Nixon. Jerry terHorst, bland and honest and decent, was of a piece with his boss, Gerald Ford. Jody Powell, smart and irritable and defensive, was just right for Jimmy Carter. And Dee Dee Myers, who recently resigned as White House press secretary, was a quintessentially Clintonian figure. But Tony Blankley is, arguably, the last man in the world you would conjure up as flack for Newt the Angry. He is a man whose very physical presence seems to say, "Live and let live." As well as: "Have some more champagne." He loves to cook—"I'm a great believer in stocks; stocks are magical. You can reduce them down and bring them back up; you can make them do amazing things"—and to eat and to throw parties and to drink good wine. He has an amiable, amused voice that slips in and out of a faint English accent, the result of British parents and an American life. His voice, as a matter of fact, is not unlike a good veal stock, rich and unctuous.

Nor has Blankley had the sort of life that one would think of in a Newtian context. Growing up in Los Angeles as the son of the West Coast comptroller for Columbia Pictures, he was a gifted violinist and, he says, a mediocre child actor. In the 1956 boxing movie "The Harder They Fall," Blankley played opposite—well, in the vicinity of, at least—Humphrey Bogart. Bogart was dying of cancer at the time, and Blankley likes to tell people, with mock pomposity, "Bogie and I made our last picture together." In the Blankley family, it is held that the artist gave his most fully realized performance, just before the end of a career cut short by a sudden, puberty-induced loss of cuteness, on Danny Thomas's television show "Make Room for Daddy." Blankley played an obnoxious cousin visiting the Thomas household, who, upon seeing Thomas in an apron doing a little light dusting, said to Danny's TV son, "Your father? He looks more like your mother."

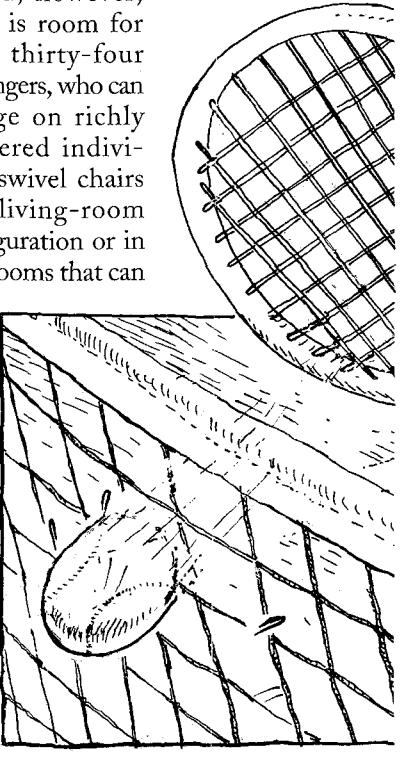
Blankley acknowledges that he and his boss are "very different guys—different personality types, really." But he also says that there "is no inconsistency between my natural inclination to live and let live and the idea that we do need to straighten things up a bit in this society." He believes, he says, in all the things that Gingrich believes in: he believes in the Newtian vision of a radical reformation of American politics and culture (the Gingrich people like to call it a renewal), a process that necessarily occasions serious and bitter fighting. "But I don't have the drive to stand up and do the fighting myself."

He can fight best, he says, by doing what he is doing these days—by explaining to the liberalmediaélite that Newt Gingrich is, really, a nicer, more thoughtful sort of fellow than they have assumed. "One part of Newt's style is a certain truculence, and that is the part that gets on the evening news," he says. "For example, take his original remark about orphanages. That remark could be taken as dismissive—'Let's just send them to the orphanages'—and that would not be an unreasonable interpretation. It is a wrong interpretation, but it is not an unreasonable one. I have to work with people to help them see that remark in context with Newt's speeches, to help them see that what Newt was talking about was a serious idea, that there are cases where it is better for the children to put them in the care of society, rather than leaving them to be destroyed in a terrible environment. In this context, what Newt was talking about was something other well-intentioned people can agree with." Blankley smiled sweetly and slyly. "As a matter of fact, Mary McGrory wrote exactly that in the *Post* last week, after she and I chatted a bit."

QUALITY AIR TIME

A TRAVELLER recently sampled luxury aloft on the reborn MGM Grand Air, billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's star-friendly airline, which went back into business this fall after shutting down at the end of 1992. Unless business has improved, the service, with two flights a day between Los Angeles and New York, offers the poshest value in the skies: it's like having your own private airplane. On two recent flights, there were no more than four passengers, and those were outnumbered by five extremely attentive—if underemployed—flight attendants. A colleague reports that on a flight in mid-November there was only one passenger: herself.

Since MGM Grand relaunched, it has used Boeing 727s, rather than the two-class, lumpy, aging DC-8s it used before. Accommodations are now first class only—or, as the company prefers to call it, MGM Grand Class, although it is no costlier than first class on a number of other airlines. On MGM Grand, however, there is room for only thirty-four passengers, who can lounge on richly leathered individual swivel chairs in a living-room configuration or in staterooms that can



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be reserved by buying additional tickets, which makes MGM Grand the airline of choice for rock stars, movie moguls, and other high profiles.

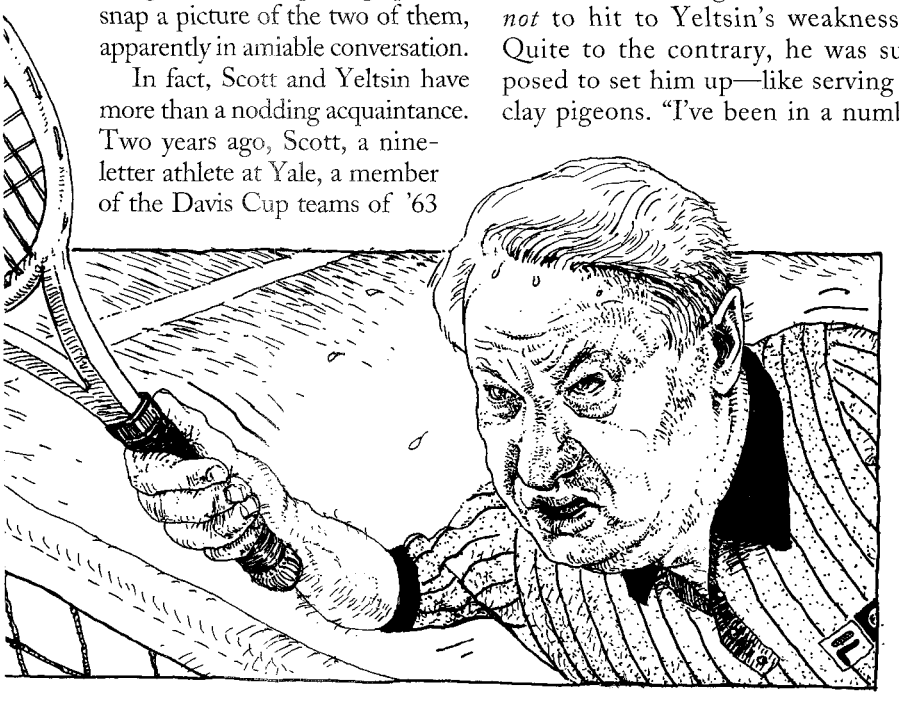
On one of the traveller's recent flights, the captain's announcements were garbled beyond understanding. Since MGM Grand claims to be the only airline that carries an F.A.A.-certified mechanic on every flight, the traveller suggested that the mechanic deign to fix the sound system. He also asked whether it would be beneath the status of an F.A.A.-certified mechanic to fix a toilet seat that would not, under any circumstances, stay up when lifted—presenting a special problem for male passengers, who must keep the seat up with one hand while attending to the business at hand with the other.

RUSSIAN TENNIS: ADVANTAGE YELTSIN

In Moscow this past November, Eugene Scott, the director of the Kremlin Cup tennis tournament, had an idea for his annual Christmas card: he would mosey up to where Boris Yeltsin, a great tennis fan, was sitting in the stands of the vast Olympic arena and get a courtside photographer to snap a picture of the two of them, apparently in amiable conversation.

In fact, Scott and Yeltsin have more than a nodding acquaintance. Two years ago, Scott, a nine-letter athlete at Yale, a member of the Davis Cup teams of '63 and '65, and the editor of the magazine *Tennis Week*, was summoned from his tournament duties on the morning of the finals to play in a doubles match with the President. "What happened," Scott said the other day, "was that my partner, Gennady Burbulis, the former State Secretary, and I had won the pro-celebrity tournament, which is called the Big Hat. The winners put on this huge hat with two holes for their heads, and the photographers take pictures. Quite ridiculous—cartoonish. At any rate, we were challenged by Yeltsin and his partner, Shamil Tarpishev, a former Davis Cup player and a former captain of the U.S.S.R. team. They hadn't played in the Big Hat—Yeltsin apparently didn't want to play in public."

The match took place on an indoor court. Each player had a separate three-room suite in which to change, and while Scott was getting into his tennis clothes Tarpishev invited himself in and began talking about Yeltsin's game. The gist of it was that the President had been in an automobile accident a few months before, and his back was in bad shape. Thus he didn't like high shots to his backhand; didn't like balls hit to him with big topspin; didn't mind short lobs; but certainly did mind those that were deep and threatened to go over his head. It was during this litany that Scott realized that what he was being asked to do was *not* to hit to Yeltsin's weaknesses. Quite to the contrary, he was supposed to set him up—like serving up clay pigeons. "I've been in a number of situations like this before," Scott said. "Pro-am tournaments, or corporate outings where you were expected to dump one to please the C.E.O. I would start off with noble intentions, but in the end my competitive instincts would take over. Never had I thrown a match, and I wasn't sure about this one."



The four competitors met out by the net. Yeltsin was wearing Adidas sneakers and socks, Reebok outerwear, and a Fila shirt, and was carrying a Prince racquet. "Physically, he's very impressive," Scott recalled. "He's six four, and he stands unbelievably erect, as if he had a steel pipe in his back. His hands are huge and enveloped mine when we shook hands at the net. In stride he reminded me of Don Budge, who always moved in the gait of a champion, even long after his retirement."

The four men went out onto the court to warm up. "I felt I was inside a pinball machine," Scott remembered. "Yeltsin's idea is to hit every ball as hard as he can. They were careening off the walls. He was quite undaunted—big smile, and then he'd crack another. I was reminded of the two theories about learning golf: one of them is that you start off with a slow, easy swing, eventually increasing it to full power, but the problem here is that you pick up mistakes as you increase the swing. The other theory, totally contradictory, is that you start by belting the ball hard, the idea being that if you can groove the swing you haven't had the opportunity to cultivate errors. This latter is the Yeltsin principle."

In the match itself, there were a lot of double faults and a number of aces, even against as skillful a retriever as Scott. "He could really fire them," Scott said. "Hit or miss. A number of the aces weren't really aces, though. Part of the deal was that he had to win his serve, so that when one of those blinding second serves would miss a line by a foot or so, the idea was to raise a hand and call out '*Khorosho*,' which means 'good,' or even '*Ochen khorosho*,' which means 'very good.' Yeltsin never seemed to complain about these odd calls. He's very competitive."

Rather as predicted, the Yeltsin-Tarpishev team prevailed.

"It was an interesting experience,"

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Scott said. "But you won't catch me doing anything like that again unless Yeltsin is involved. I enjoyed him. His tennis is rather like George Bush's. Both have an exaggerated sense of how good they are, which makes them more effective players. They'd have a really good match."

Gene Scott got his Christmas-card picture. Seated right behind Yeltsin at the Olympic arena, he leaned forward so that the photographer courtside snapped him in conversation.

"I was saying, '*Ochen khorosho*,' " he said.

IT'S ALL IN THE TRANSITION

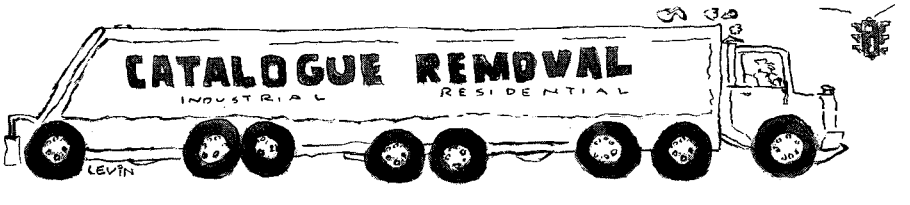
ANYONE who doesn't know what it means to change from twenty years of Democratic rule in New York to a fresh new Republican team need only look at the venues Governor George Pataki's people chose for their most highly publicized meetings during the transition period to get a taste of the G.O.P. future. No town halls, no hotel ballrooms for this crowd.

The first gathering, a reconciliation of sorts between Pataki and Rudy Giuliani, Betrayer of the Party, was held at the Union League Club, an exclusive Park Avenue association and until recently a bastion of New York's male establishment. Another postelection meeting was held at Albany's exclusive Steuben Club. (You have to look hard in Albany to find something you can legitimately call exclusive.) The biggest of all the transition gatherings was held at the Yale Club in Manhattan—of all three places the one with the most obvious admission policy.

"We couldn't reserve anything before November, and because of the holidays the hotels are completely booked," Zenia Mucha, Pataki's press secretary, said. "Anyway, it's less expensive to rent a room at a club." (Trust the Republicans to find a way to make a place like the Union League Club—which still caters primarily to captains of industry—sound like a cost-cutting measure.) The Yale Club welcomed Pataki's "transition team," a non-exclusive group consisting of more than two hundred businessmen, officials, legislators, bankers, and socialites—the "best and brightest men and women this state has to offer," in Pataki's words.

IN transitioning, the new Republicans showed themselves to be masters of the Democratic quota-makers' game of "twofering." Twofering is when you select someone based on more than one characteristic. Like, why take just a successful executive when you could have a woman who is a successful executive, with an interest in constitutional law? Libby Pataki, a transition-team member, is a farmer *and* a first lady. Other examples: Rabbi Joseph Freund is not just a rabbi—he's also a sheriff, or at least a member of the board of directors of the Orange County Sheriff's Foundation. Monsignor William O'Brien is not just a monsignor—he's also a C.E.O. Women, by the mere fact of their sex, tend to be front-loaded, virtual threefers. Toni Fay is not just black—she's also a woman and a vice-president at Time Warner, Inc. Josephine Lim is not just a woman and an Asian but also an account representative for Metropolitan Life.

Another member of the team is Henry Kissinger. Well, actually, Kissinger is a member of the smaller, more exclusive, fifty-three-person Pataki Transition Advisory Group, which also includes Malcolm Forbes, Jr., Ronald Lauder, David Rockefeller, Hugh Carey, and Ed Koch. Pataki may feel that Kissinger, a master of shuttle diplomacy, will be able to offer advice on crises between Upstate and the City, or that his experience dealing with such personalities as Leonid Brezhnev and Lon Nol will help in selecting a new Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, say, or a new head for the Office of General Services. Or, who knows, maybe Pataki will just bomb New Jersey.



HAPPY ENDINGS

AMONG the most egregious of the literary shenanigans that the late Lady Maria St. Just got up to as putative watchdog of Tennessee Williams' literary legacy (reported three weeks ago in this magazine) was the blocking of a two-book biography of Williams which the playwright himself had authorized. After St. Just's death last year, the obstacle was removed, and the Williams estate could allow the much-needed biography to proceed.

The final scene was played out on December 16th, when Michael Denneny, a senior editor at Crown, burst into a sixth-floor conference room, where forty members of the publishing company's staff were meeting, to announce that he'd just acquired Lyle Leverich's seventeen-year labor of love. "Everyone applauded," Denneny said. Eight publishers had been bidding for the biography, the first volume of which, "Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams," has been ready for publication since 1989. (The second volume will take three more years to complete.) The company agreed to pay Leverich, who has been subsisting on a veteran's pension and Social Security, three hundred thousand dollars for North American rights to the two books. "I haven't been this impressed by a biography since Judith Thurman's 'Isak Dinesen,' " said Denneny, who also edited the Thurman book.

Leverich, who lives in Kentfield, California, just north of San Francisco, got the news from his agent the afternoon the book was sold. He was standing at the window of his apartment, which looks out on a bird sanctuary, watching the wildlife celebrate a break in the rainy weather. "I'm in a state of cautious euphoria," he said. He then apologized for not having the words to describe his feelings. But the next day he called back and said, "I feel like a man imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit suddenly let free. Like Dreyfus let off Devil's Island." There was a pause. "It's an amazing feeling," he said. ♦

This week's contributors: James Wolcott, Michael Kelly, David Brown, George Plimpton, Amy Wilentz, John Lahr.

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What does O. J. Simpson's defense "dream team" face in Marcia Clark? A prosecutor who refused to give up trial work—and is winning so far.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

MARCIA CLARK was not supposed to become the most famous prosecutor in American history. If all had gone as planned in 1993, she would now be roosting on a comfortable perch in the Los Angeles District Attorney's bureaucracy instead of prosecuting the case against O. J. Simpson. By the spring of 1993, when she was almost forty, Clark had been trying cases in the D.A.'s office for twelve years, the last four of them in the special-trials unit, which handles the county's most complex and sensitive investigations. Around the time she was prosecuting two men charged with murdering two parishioners during a church service in South Central Los Angeles, Gil Garcetti, the District Attorney, felt that she had earned a promotion. She would become a supervisor, overseeing the bulk of the office's career-criminal cases and advising the deputy district attorneys who would actually be appearing in court. Her salary, which had been around ninety thousand dollars a year, would likely break into six figures, with the prospect of more increases to come. Relieved of the pressure and stress of trying cases, Clark would move into management.

It didn't work. The change was a disaster. This is not altogether uncommon in prosecutors' offices. Many good trial lawyers make weak administrators. But most prosecutors are so eager to escape trial work (and get a raise) that they hang on to their new jobs and, thanks to civil service, take root in them. Trials wear lawyers out—especially prosecutors. Because prosecutors must orchestrate what happens in a trial—which means everything from making sure the witnesses show up in the right order to putting the exhibit stickers on the evidence—the logistical burdens are enormous. The hours are long. Witnesses are usually uncoöperative or, almost as often, are criminals themselves. The police, ostensibly a prosecutor's ally, may be lazy or incompetent, or both, or worse. And it's the prosecutor who must bear the burden of knowing that it is essentially up to him or her whether a murderer (or other criminal) walks out the door when it's all over. Small wonder, then, that many supervisors content themselves with war stories, second guesses, and long lunches.

So what happened to Marcia Clark's career as an administrator was unusual. "I hated it," Clark told me recently, of her promotion. "I begged them to let me back in the courtroom. I learned that all I wanted to do was try cases."

"Marcia was probably the first person in the history of the office to walk away from a supervisor's job and ask to go back on the line," Lynn Reed Baragona, her closest friend, and a fellow deputy district attorney, said. "For starters, most people wouldn't make the financial sacrifice. In special trials, Marcia can really never make more than about ninety thousand, and, as a single mom with two small kids, she has that very much on her mind. But she's got to be in court. That's why she's a prosecutor."

Clark's love of the courtroom is obvious. One day recently, as she was rushing to Judge Lance A. Ito's courtroom, she spoke of how judges sometimes punish lateness by putting jurors in the box and having them wait in silence for the missing lawyer. "When you finally get there, they're all hating you for wasting their time," she said. "Ugh!" Clark recoiled at the memory of the torments she had undergone. But then she laughed—a raucous cackle—relishing the disaster, the way true trial lawyers savor every rich moment, good or bad, that occurs in a courtroom. That is the other side of trying cases. The work is hard and the pressure is great, but the sensation of standing before jurors and exhorting them to do justice is a match-

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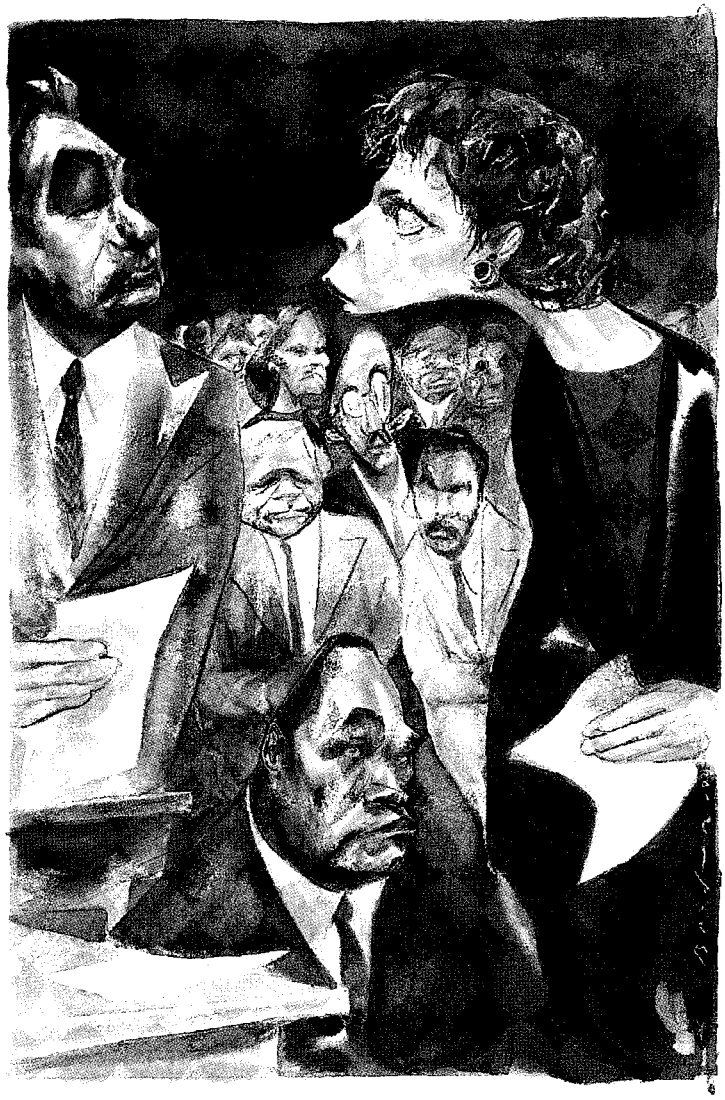
less professional high. Clark couldn't give it up.

It took a little while for Clark's superiors to fill her slot in management, and she had only just returned to the special-trials unit when Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were murdered, on June 12th. Before that, Clark had had time to help plan a bridal shower for Baragona, scheduled for lunch on June 13th. "But Marcia called at the last moment to cancel," Baragona recalled. "I said, 'How can you cancel? You're throwing this thing.' She said, 'I have to do this search warrant. It could end up being kind of big. I'll tell you about it later.' We laugh about that now. I guess it's a little bigger than 'kind of big.' "



Clark is proving to be the equal of her more celebrated adversaries. Her courtroom record suggests that she may even be better.

SEVEN months later, it indubitably is. Just now, too, as pretrial proceedings lurch to a conclusion, the Simpson case seems to be taking its toll on all the major participants, starting with Judge Ito. His problems began on November 7th, at the hearing on whether he would allow television cameras in the courtroom. There, in a stunt for those very cameras, he stacked up twenty-one boxes of mail he had received that overwhelmingly urged him to evict the cameras. His comments and his ruling, later that day, made it clear that he never had any intention of limiting media coverage, but had used the boxes to remind journalists that they weren't as popular as they thought they were. This tweak notwithstanding, the erstwhile media critic then switched sides and gave a five-part television interview to KCBS-TV, in Los Angeles, thus needlessly and bizarrely complicating the process of selecting an unbiased jury.

Jury selection led Simpson's defense lawyers to new depths of cynicism. One hears no more public talk from them about their posted reward for the "real" killer. Simpson's defense, it seems clear, is simply that the prosecution and the police botched this case so badly that no one can know who the killer is. And Robert L. Shapiro and Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., Simpson's lead attorneys, appear determined to keep playing the race card. For example, after Clark and her co-counsel, William Hodgman, engaged in some routine questioning of black prospective jurors during jury selection on October 27th, Shapiro denounced the prosecutors to the press in the courthouse lobby. "It implies an insidious effort to try to get black jurors removed for cause because they are black, because they have black heroes, and because O. J. Simpson is one of them," he said. As if the point could be missed, Cochran that same day ventured to the twelfth-floor media center to say to the assembled reporters, "We're really concerned about the tenor of the questions and the way they go after certain jurors."

The attacks had their intended effect of throwing Clark on the defensive. Since the day of Simpson's arrest, she has known that, notwithstanding the evidence against him, she will always be the underdog in the case. Even many of her colleagues say that Simpson is too popular ever to be convicted. Indeed, when she spoke to the full panel of prospective jurors on November 2nd, Clark sounded almost apologetic. "Now, in this case, all of us, every single one of us, I think, here have very good impressions of the defendant," she told the prospective jurors as she paced in front of them. "We've all seen 'Naked Gun.' He made us laugh. Good guy on TV, sports commentator. We've had him referred to as the All-American Hero, the clean-cut image of the American man, a good-looking man. 'Looks like a nice guy.' It's the truth. We've all felt this way. This is not a popular case for the prosecution to bring. Wouldn't you agree? Wouldn't you all agree?" Silently, the prospective jurors seemed to. "Now, in this case we talk a lot about the burden of proof," she continued. "Because this is such a famous case—the defendant is such a famous guy, he's such a sympathetic guy—there's going to be a real pull to want to do something different than what the law requires. I understand. You know, I'm not just the people's representative up here, like, you know, with all right angles to me. I'm a person, too."

THE pretrial theatrics have obscured two basic truths about the Simpson trial. The first is that the prosecutors have a strong case. The prosecution has presented abundant evidence, which has come to light in the transcripts of the grand-jury proceedings, the preliminary hearing, and the pretrial

STEVE BRODNER

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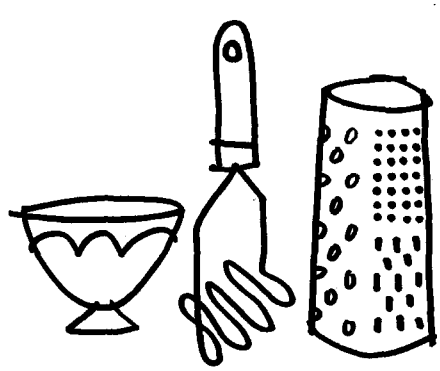
hearings before Judge Ito, that on the night of June 12th Simpson drove his Ford Bronco from his house, on North Rockingham Avenue, to Nicole's, on South Bundy Drive, and killed both his ex-wife and her friend Goldman. One starts with the fact that Simpson is a convicted wife abuser. Allan Park, the limousine driver, testified that on the night of the crime he pulled up to Simpson's home at about ten-forty and saw neither Simpson nor his Ford Bronco. About fifteen minutes later, Park saw a black person walk in the front door, and, according to testimony, by the morning of June 13th the Bronco was parked on the street next to the house. According to the prosecution's preliminary tests, blood of Simpson's type was found at the murder scene and at his home, and so were a pair of bloody gloves. (The results of more conclusive DNA blood tests are either incomplete or not yet public.) The interior of Simpson's Bronco was likewise stained with blood. Droplets of blood of Simpson's type, according to the prosecution, were found to the left of bloody shoe prints leading away from the murder scene. Soon after the crime, Simpson was found to have a wound on his left hand. In his interview with the police a day after the crime, Simpson was asked how he had cut his hand. According to a transcript of Simpson's statement that was published in a supermarket tabloid and is reputed to be authentic, he said that he had cut his hand at home but couldn't remember how, and then had cut it again in Chicago, on a glass, when he heard the news of the murders. It is, to put it mildly, not much of an explanation.

Another truth about the case is equally simple. For all the media's fawning over Simpson's "dream team" of defense lawyers, and for all the public hostility toward Clark, she is winning. The public reception accorded Clark might well serve as a case study of what happens when a woman becomes dramatically visible in a job traditionally associated with men. On the one hand, she has been patronized: Shapiro has called her "an attractive lady" with "great legs." On the other, Clark has been demonized with that adjective that somehow never attaches to a man: "shrill." And Cochran has called her "a little hard." Still, Clark has won every pretrial motion of any consequence. To be sure, this is due partly to the state of the law: Republican-appointed judges in California, including Ito, have made it more and more difficult for defendants to suppress evidence and gain other procedural advantages. But it is true, too, that Clark is winning because she is every bit the equal of her more celebrated and more highly paid adversaries. Considerable evidence—a review of Clark's life and career, based on interviews with several of her friends, colleagues, and former adversaries; the trial records of her most important prior cases; and several conversations with her—suggests that she may even be better. It appears, in fact, that the Simpson trial is shaping up as a battle of criminal-justice archetypes: the hands-on career prosecutor obsessed with vindicating the lives of crime victims against the defense lawyers willing to say and do anything within the law to see their client go free. Clark is the paradigmatic "lifer"—the term prosecutors use to describe a lawyer who devotes his or her entire career to public service. So is her co-counsel, Bill Hodgman. As the director of the Bureau of Central Operations in the District Attorney's Office, and a veteran of forty murder trials to Clark's twenty, Hodgman actually outranks Clark; he also enjoys a reputation equal to, if not better than, hers, in significant part because of his victory in a long and complex case against the savings-and-loan operator Charles Keating, Jr., tried before Judge Ito in 1991.

But what sets Clark apart—and puts her on at least an even footing with her adversaries in the Simpson camp—is her sense of theatre. To juries, that love of the courtroom is palpable and infectious. Born, perhaps, of a life that has seen its share of trauma, and strengthened by the mysteries and thrillers she reads obsessively, Clark's dramatic instincts have allowed her to touch jurors in a way that captures both their hearts and their minds. The Simpson case, with its toxic stew of sex, race, violence, and celebrity, will demand a prosecutor who can do more than present the witnesses in the right order. It will need someone who can harness passions, someone who can recite the facts but can also tell a story.



MARCIA CLARK joined the District Attorney's Office in 1981, and she took to the work immediately. "Marcia and I were hired around the same time, and we were the only two deputy district attorneys in the Culver City courthouse for a year," her friend Diane Vezzani told me. "From the start, she just loved trying cases. I never saw anyone with more energy. And it wasn't just in court. She'd read the advance sheets"—reports of appellate-court decisions—"and boil them down to an index-card file. She must have twenty-five boxes of cards now. I used to tease her that she'd have a nervous breakdown if she didn't get a chance to read the advance sheets." (Clark finally gave up her card file with the birth of her second child, two years ago.) Her dedication quickly won Clark the attention of her superiors.

The turning point in her career came when she found herself under the wing of one of the office's legendary prosecutors. Harvey Giss, who has the angular face of a film-noir detective, speaks today with a valedictory air about his years as a top homicide prosecutor in Los Angeles; tired of the strain of murder trials, he now fights auto-insurance fraud instead. Clark was assigned to work with Giss in 1985, just four years after she joined the District Attorney's Office. The defendant in the case that brought them together was, like O. J. Simpson, a widely admired figure in Los Angeles. "James Hawkins was a big local hero here for a while," Giss told me. "He worked at his father's grocery store, in Watts, and one day in 1983 he shot a gang member who was accosting passersby. After the shooting, the gang firebombed the store, and everyone, including the mayor, praised Hawkins for standing up to the gangs." But Giss subsequently obtained evidence that Hawkins had actually

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killed the gang member not by accident, as Hawkins claimed, but intentionally, about half an hour after the attack on the passersby. What was more, Giss charged Hawkins in an unrelated double murder that had taken place about a year later. "I knew I needed some help in the double murder," Giss said. He got Marcia Clark. "We were like two peas in a pod," he went on. "As I got to know her, I could see she was the real deal. I told her I didn't believe in working with anyone who wasn't my equal, so I told her we were going to try it halfsie-halfsie."

Giss assigned Clark the toughest part of the case—the ballistics. "The strange thing about this case was that our big break came when Hawkins escaped from jail just before we picked a jury," Giss said. "When we finally tracked him down, there was a huge shoot-out—a hundred and eighty rounds fired—and we thought one of the guns seized from Hawkins after the shoot-out was the same one he used in the double murder." As ballistics experts examined the gun, they discovered that its barrel had been scraped with an instrument such as a file. Knowing that the grooves on gun barrels are unique, like fingerprints, Hawkins had evidently tried to alter them before he used the gun again. But Clark, by presenting meticulously prepared expert testimony to the jury, was able to make a strong case that the murder weapon in the double homicide and the altered gun seized from Hawkins after the shoot-out were one and the same.

"The trial was like a war," Barry Levin, who represented Hawkins, told me. "There were six months of jury selection, and the actual trial in front of the jury lasted thirteen months. Marcia was very junior at the time, so what's unusual about her is that she cut her teeth on murder cases. Harvey was the most tenacious prosecutor in the L.A. D.A.'s Office. You could just see Marcia grow in the course of the case. Not only was she competent but she was unflappable. It was a death-penalty case, and after my client was convicted Harvey had Marcia get up and do one of the summations in the penalty phase. In truth, I wasn't too worried, because she had been so low-key up to that point, but then she made the most impassioned plea about why my client should die. As it turned out, the jury gave him life instead. But you could

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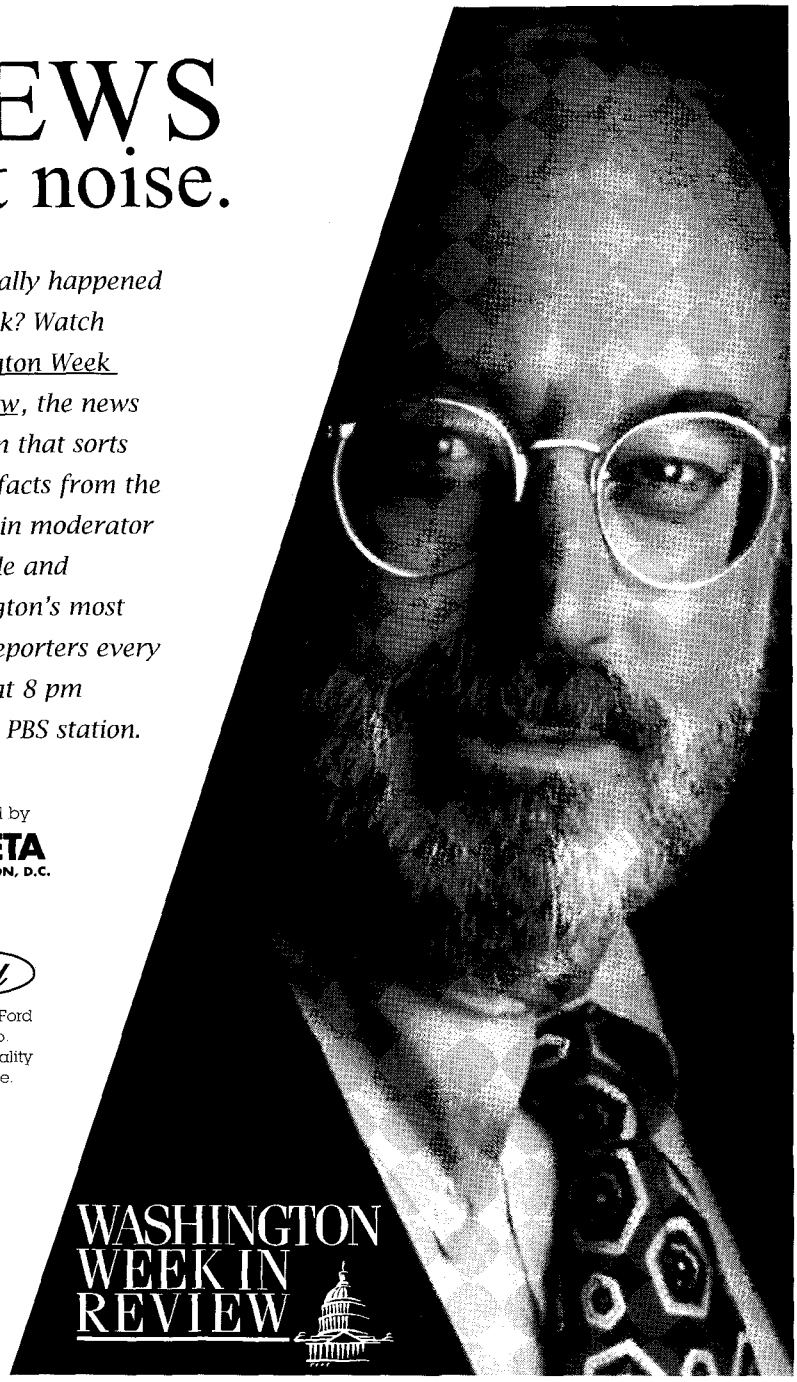

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see Harvey's influence on Marcia. She was a tiger."

Giss's influence was great, and traces of it can still be seen in Clark's style. The thorough preparation of both live testimony and scientific evidence; the aggressive response to defense attacks; the passion and the fire for the jury—all are Clark's hallmarks, as they were Giss's. But differences between the two also stand out. Like a lot of prosecutors, Giss views trials as wars—a trait that has manifested itself in rancorous relationships with some defense attorneys. Clark, in contrast, seems never to have had a cross personal word with an adversary, even in the crucible of the Simpson case. Clark always has a warm greeting for Johnnie Cochran, and he has a big smile for her in return. A former deputy district attorney himself, Cochran juggles many cases against his former colleagues, and he knows that it doesn't pay to make unnecessary enemies. Clark is plainly more wary of Shapiro, who, because his office is in distant Century City, isn't part of the regular courthouse gang, and Clark twits him every chance she gets. For example, when Shapiro proposed that, "since we have so many lawyers," Judge Ito conduct one pretrial hearing while another judge supervised jury selection, Clark raced to the bench and gestured to the expensive legal talent clustered around Simpson. "Your Honor, the defense indeed does have enough lawyers, but the prosecution does not," she told Ito.

For Harvey Giss, trials were basically about defendants; for Marcia Clark, they are, for the most part, about victims. This has long been apparent on a daily basis in Judge Ito's courtroom. Like guests at a wedding, spectators at criminal trials advertise where they stand by where they sit. Every morning, Clark stops and greets the families of the victims, who sit right behind her, in the first row of spectators. Since midsummer, long before the victims' families began publicly announcing that they believed Simpson was guilty, body language had made their feelings plain. Denise Brown, Nicole's sister, seated next to a victim-witness advocate from the District Attorney's Office, who keeps reporters away, often places her hand on Clark's and whispers a private greeting in her ear. "I think that Marcia is wonderful, a terrific woman," Denise Brown told me recently, "and I think that my whole family will vouch for that one." In contrast to their conspicuous affection for Clark, Denise and her relatives avoid eye contact with their former in-law, and the defendant never looks at them, either.

A similar situation existed in Clark's most celebrated trial before the Simpson case. In 1989, Rebecca Schaeffer was an up-and-coming twenty-one-year-old actress, who had starred in the television comedy "My Sister Sam." On July 18th of that year, Robert John Bardo, an obsessed fan of Schaeffer's, who, unbeknownst to her, had been stalking her for two years, rang the doorbell of her home. When Schaeffer opened the door, Bardo shot her dead with a .357 magnum.

"Rebecca was killed Tuesday morning, July 18, 1989, and my husband and I flew down that afternoon," Danna Schaeffer, Rebecca's mother, told me recently over the telephone from her home, in Portland, Oregon. "The next morning, we went into Wilshire Homicide, and she was sitting there in a pink suit looking very beautiful and serious, and she said, 'My name is Marcia Clark and I'm going to be your prosecutor.' " Bardo was caught within a day of the murder, and he immediately confessed to the shooting. The major issue at the trial—a non-jury trial before Judge Dino Fulgoni—was whether Bardo was mentally fit to commit the crime of first-degree murder. "There were a million hearings and continuances, and many times afterwards Marcia called us and reported to us what was going on," Danna Schaeffer told me. Finally, as the trial was set to begin, in September of 1991, the victim's mother received a letter from Marcia Clark. "She wrote me a long letter before the trial telling me she was working like a dog on this case," Danna Schaeffer said. "It was a personal letter on a yellow legal pad, just about how personally connected she felt to Rebecca. That's how she approached the case. She made us feel that she was working on our personal behalf." The trial, one of the first to be covered by Court TV, featured extensive psychiatric testimony from experts on both sides. "They say nature favors the prepared mind," Danna Schaeffer said. "I always thought that she could and did land on her feet if something unexpected came up. Marcia was brilliant at the trial. I worship that woman." Judge Fulgoni convicted Bardo of first-degree murder and sentenced him to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Developing one orientation or the other—toward defendants or toward victims—depends largely on how and why one has come to be a prosecutor. During a recent break in pretrial proceedings, I asked Clark what led her to the District Attorney's Office. After graduating from Southwestern University School of Law, in Los Angeles, in 1979, she said, she had worked briefly as a junior defense attorney with a top-flight firm and had soon drawn the assignment of helping to defend James (Doc) Holiday, a leader in the notorious Black Guerrilla Family. The case against Holiday included a charge of attempted murder. "Doc had lured this woman called Vicki D into a car," Clark said, "and then stabbed her about a million times and left her for dead—just a horrible, vicious crime. That's what happened, but the fact was that the government's proof was very thin, and I was assigned to draft the brief asking the judge to dismiss the case. I knew that it was a winner of a motion, and one night I was working on it and I just choked. I said to my husband, 'I can't do this kind of work.' My husband said, 'Pick up your pen. We have to pay the rent,' and, of course, I did. But when I heard that we really did win the motion, I just said, 'Oh my God!' My boss at the firm said I should probably join the D.A.'s Office. When I went for my interview with John Van de Kamp, who was the D.A. at the time, I basically threw myself at his feet. I said to him, 'You're going to decide whether I practice law. I can't do criminal defense, won't do civil. This is the only job I want.' "

This predilection emerged from her upbringing. She was born Marcia Kleks, forty-one years ago, in Berkeley, California. Her father, an Israeli immigrant, was with the Food and Drug Administration, and he was transferred often when Marcia was growing up. Despite all the moves, she has remained unmistakably Californian. One day re-

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cently, as we were chatting in the hallway during a break in the proceedings, she asked me what I had done the previous night. After I told her, she said, "Know what I did? I was here until eleven-thirty reading jury questionnaires." Rolling her eyes to mock her monastic existence, she added, "Party on, dude!" A certain flip quality—possibly also Californian in origin—may be Clark's principal weakness in the courtroom. When she was complaining about the candor of some prospective jurors, she remarked to Judge Ito, "I wish we could only put all the jurors on polygraph." Clark later said she meant the remark as a joke, but Shapiro's assessment of it seems about right: "One of the most idiotic statements made in a courtroom anywhere."

Clark grew up in a household that venerated liberal Democrats, the State of Israel, and high grades for kids. (Her only sibling, a brother, is now an electrical engineer in Los Angeles.) She spent her formative years in San Mateo County, a pleasant middle-class suburban area south of San Francisco. Roslyn Dauber, a friend of thirty years who is now an Academy Award-winning documentary-film producer in Los Angeles, said, "We both have these really fond memories of sailing in her little dinghy in the bay, going to Hebrew school twice a week after school. We lived in this new community called Foster City, and we always had this feeling of starting out, making a new town, making a new world. Part of that was the times, too. People who were growing up around San Francisco in this time thought they were remaking the world." In this respect, Marcia was indeed a child of the sixties. "She was always very interested in justice and politics," Dauber said. "It was all very innocent. It somehow seems very natural, coming from where she did, that she now does the kind of work she does."

A theatrical streak came out at U.C.L.A., where she studied dance and majored in political science. Around that time, she met Gaby Horowitz, a handsome and charismatic Israeli, who became her first husband. Horowitz had his own dramatic flair: he made his living as a professional backgammon player. The late seventies were boom years for the game, and Horowitz thrived in the epicenter of the fad. He played at Pips, a glitzy club founded by Hugh Hefner and others, and frequented by some modest celebrities of the era (including, occasionally, O. J. Simpson), and he also frequented the Cavendish West, a club just west of the Sunset Strip that was a haven for serious backgammon and bridge players. Marcia Horowitz became a familiar, if unlikely, sight at the Cavendish, too. She played the game rarely, and often brought her law books to the club and studied at an unoccupied gaming table.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, given their vastly different career choices, the marriage between Marcia and Gaby did not last. Shortly after Marcia graduated from law school, in 1979, she and Gaby divorced. "It was a question of life style," a friend of theirs from that era told me. "I don't think you could stay up until three or four in the morning every night and be a successful attorney." Gaby's fortunes headed south with the collapse of his marriage and the end of the backgammon craze, and in 1989 he was accidentally shot in the head while he and a friend were examining a gun. People who saw Gaby Horowitz a couple of years after his accident say he could no longer walk or talk. He recently returned to Israel, and is living there with his mother.

Shortly after the divorce, Marcia, then twenty-seven, married Gordon Clark, who at the time of the wedding was a twenty-two-year-old employee of the Church of Scientology. Marcia herself never became a Scientologist. (Strangely, the lay minister who performed Marcia's second marriage ceremony was the person who was examining the gun with Gaby when he was shot.) Gordon Clark eventually became a computer programmer, and he and Marcia lived together for more than a decade. They had two children, now five and two years old, before they separated, toward the end of 1993. Marcia has custody of the children. Roslyn Dauber said, "Nineteen-ninety-three was a very rough time for Marcia. She had this job she didn't like in administration. She was not getting what she thought she wanted out of her marriage. So she decided to change everything. She ended her marriage and went back to her old job. It's really typical of her in a way. It's not that she knows how all this is going

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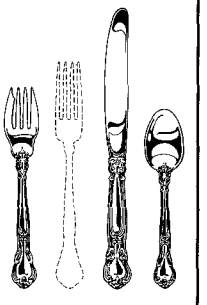

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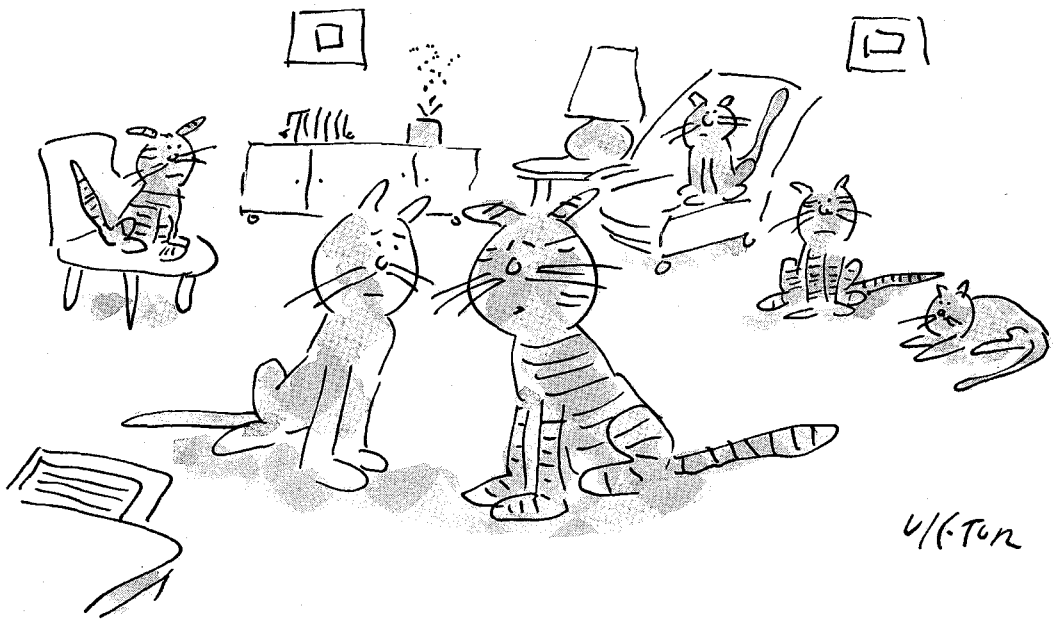

"Mom always liked you and Pinkie and Spike and Custard and Fluffy best."

• •

to wind up. She certainly doesn't have anyone lined up to marry. But she's not someone who's afraid to take a leap into the unknown."

PART of the appeal that prosecuting has for Clark, according to her friend and colleague Lynn Baragona, is that it allows her to be someone else in the courtroom. "It sounds silly, but she really believes that when she's in court she's fighting for truth, justice, and the American way," Baragona said. The paramount obligation of a defense lawyer, of course, is not to the truth but to the client. And the differences between Clark and Shapiro—between these archetypes of prosecutor and defense lawyer—are well illustrated by one previous courtroom encounter. In some ways, the case is oddly reminiscent of the Simpson matter, and it may offer some clues to the course of the trial that is about to begin.

According to the transcript of the preliminary hearing, on August 18, 1984, Theodore Pacheco returned to the home of his estranged wife, Yvonne, who was there at the time with her children and a friend named Lincoln Godwin. Pacheco, who had a shotgun with him, approached Godwin in an apparent jealous rage and shot him dead in front of Pacheco's five-year-old daughter.

Shapiro's defense epitomized his win-at-all-costs philosophy—even if it meant disparaging the dead and subjecting a young child to the ordeal of testifying in court. Shapiro evidently thought that establishing that Godwin and Yvonne were romantically involved might ameliorate his client's problems. (Similarly, of course, Shapiro's team may allege a romantic relationship between Nicole Simpson and Ron Goldman to render the two victims less sympathetic.) Cross-examining Yvonne Pacheco, Shapiro accused her of being "more concerned about Lincoln than you were about your family members, about getting caught with him." Today, one open question in the Simpson trial is whether the defense will call either of the Simpsons' young children to testify about what they may have heard on the night of the murders. In the Pacheco case, Shapiro did call five-year-old Datra Pacheco to the stand. After a poignant attempt to get her to understand what an oath to tell the truth meant, Shapiro tried without success to elicit a version of the facts different from that provided by her mother. Wisely, then, it seems, Shapiro worked out a plea bargain. Before the case went to trial, Pacheco pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and received a sentence of fifteen years to life.

Grisly details have been a staple of Clark's cases for the last decade, but winning at all costs is not her style. Three years ago, Clark tried a man named Christopher Johnson in a "missing body" murder case. As it happens, the case involved a sophisticated use of DNA technology similar to that being employed in the Simpson case. Johnson had been arrested driving a car in which investigators found one drop of blood under the rear passsenger seat. Using DNA evidence from members of the family of the man presumed to be Johnson's victim, Clark established that the blood in the car belonged to the missing man. The case also marked the first courtroom collaboration between Clark and Detective Philip Vannatter, who is leading the Simpson investigation. Alan Saltzman, who defended Johnson, told me, "Marcia Clark did something in that case that was the most ethical thing I've ever seen a prosecutor do. From my pretrial discovery, I knew there was a witness that my client had confessed to, about the murder and also a robbery. So Marcia puts the witness on the stand and asks him about the stolen property but not anything about my client's admissions about the murder. When it comes time for me to cross-examine, I say, 'No questions.' The judge calls us up to the bench and says to me, 'Why aren't you cross-examining this witness?' I say that I don't want to open the door to let him testify about the confession to the murder. So the judge asks Marcia why she didn't bring out his confession. She said, 'I don't trust the witness about that. I don't think he's very credible.' My jaw dropped. It's not ethical for a prosecutor to put on evidence that she doesn't trust, but how many of them will give up putting on a confession? What she did was the most ethical act I've ever seen a prosecutor do in thirty-five years as a defense lawyer." Saltzman added, "And, of course, she won the case anyway."

SHORTLY after Clark was named to lead the Simpson prosecution, she started quoting to friends a favorite lyric from the Doors: "This is the strangest

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life I've ever known." She thought of the line again recently when she changed her makeup and her hair and the changes became national news. For all the speculation (Who ordered the makeover? Did Nicole's friends help? Were focus groups consulted?), the truth behind the changes is prosaic, according to Lynn Baragona. "Marcia and I were browsing at Robinsons"—a department store in Los Angeles—"and she was talking about the lines that show under her eyes sometimes," Baragona told me. "I told her I have the same problem, and I pulled this little pencil I use out of my purse and gave it to her. That was the famous makeover—that, and she got a haircut." The Doors' words came to mind, too, when she was chased in a Santa Barbara supermarket by a man wielding a copy of the *National Enquirer*. Baragona recalled of this incident, "Marcia and her kids come and stay with me in Santa Barbara on some weekends, and we were at the supermarket buying some things when this man just screams after her and starts begging her to sign his copy of the paper. Marcia doesn't want to offend the guy, but she'd rather stay away from the *Enquirer*. So she compromised. She signed his receipt." Her fame is such that freeway drivers started calling to her on her way to work, to the point where she felt compelled to travel with her tinted windows rolled up.

Seeming more bemused than upset, she told me the other day that the detectives on the case insisted that she start carrying a handgun. She has had no threats. She was furious when a photographer briefly followed her kids, but, all told, her sudden celebrity has not come at great personal cost. "When the case first started, she was practically by herself, and she was writing briefs over the weekend on her personal computer in the garage," Baragona said. "She'd call me when she was writing, and I'd hear the kids laughing and screaming in the background. But Marcia wants this. She's willing to do the work, she's willing to put up with a lot. She wants to try important cases."

The case that best sums up Clark's career to this point is the double homicide at the Mount Olive Church of God in Christ—her most recent trial, and the one that coincided with her promotion in 1993. Even in a city that has grown increasingly inured to violence, the facts of that case stood out as particularly unspeakable. According to the trial transcript, on the evening of Friday, July 21, 1989, a man wearing a mask and carrying a twelve-gauge shotgun walked into the Mount Olive Church. In the chaos set off by his arrival, a seventy-six-year-old woman named Eddie Mae Lee panicked and tried to run to the ladies' room to hide. The man pumped the shotgun and fired, killing her. Then, as he appeared to be searching the pews for someone, he stopped when he saw a man named Peter Luke, and shot him, too. (Luke survived.) Before the gunman left the church, however, he noticed Patronella Luke, Peter's wife, who was sitting toward the back of the church, and he shot her dead.

Police quickly fixed on a pair of suspects, though none of the eyewitnesses could identify the masked gunman. One was Albert Lewis, who after his wife, Cynthia, left him began stalking her, sometimes in the company of his half brother, Anthony Oliver. On July 21st, Cynthia was supposed to be playing the organ at Mount Olive, but—unbeknownst to Lewis and Oliver—she had taken the night off. Peter and Patronella Luke were Cynthia Lewis's cousins. "We set up a surveillance on Lewis's house, and we saw Lewis and Oliver taking a barrel of a shotgun out," Richard Aldahl, the detective in charge of the case, told me. "After that, we got a search warrant and found the rest of the gun and shotgun shells that matched those at the crime scene. At that point, we were certain we had our guys." One problem remained, however. "Albert Lewis had an alibi," Aldahl continued. "He said he was with his girlfriend, Jeanette Hudson, and she stuck with him on this. We had a real issue in dealing with the alibi."

Marcia Clark assigned herself the task of refuting the alibi. "It turns out Jeanette had been living in fear of Albert for ten or fifteen years," Aldahl told me. "She was really a battered woman. Marcia started spending a lot of time with Jeanette, talking with her, learning about her situation. Some prosecutors want you to interview the witnesses yourself and then just ignore them until they're brought in for testimony at the trial. Marcia was different. She wants to meet everyone in person, get to know everyone. When she puts a witness on the stand, she wants to know there will be no surprises."

The work with Jeanette Hudson paid off, and in more ways than one. "After Marcia started talking to her, she came around and admitted not only that the alibi was a lie but also that she had seen the two guys with the guns right after the murders," Aldahl said. "It broke the case open." But Clark's efforts did not stop with recruiting a witness. As Aldahl tells it, "Marcia got Jeanette into a program for battered women, and Jeanette got her life back together as a result."

The trial, which took place in the courtroom next door to Judge Ito's, was a tour de force for Clark, the perfect vehicle to allow her to demonstrate her technical expertise and her sense of theatre. "These criminals violated the one safe haven we have in this troubled world, the place where we go to enrich and glorify what is best in us, where we reaffirm our faith in all that is good and righteous, where we renew our souls and seek solace in the spiritual from a troubled world, a house of God," Clark told the jury in her summation in the penalty phase of the trial, on March 15, 1993. "This was no liquor-store robbery. This was no bank-robbery murder. This was murder in a church. . . .

"We speak of justice for a defendant, but what about the victim? Is the victim to be forgotten? What about justice for the victim? The notion of justice is not a one-sided thing. If we fail to make the punishment fit the crime, we have failed to do justice. And if the tragic deaths of Eddie Mae Lee and Patronella Luke mean anything, the punishment must be fitting. The death penalty may be the most you can do, but, ladies and gentlemen, in this case it is the least that you can do. . . .

"Their voices are forever silenced and the love they gave so freely and to so many is now cut off, and now mine is the only voice that is left to speak for them, to cry out for justice on their behalf, and on their behalf and in the name of justice I ask you to impose the only punishment that can possibly fit this crime. I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, for both of these defendants, Anthony Oliver and Albert Lewis, to impose the punishment of death."

The jurors did. ♦

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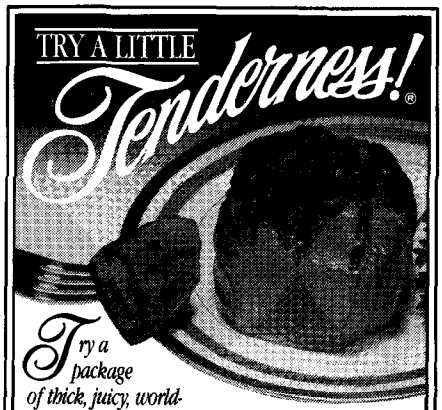

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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

ODD MAN IN

Ted Forstmann thinks he has finally bested the eighties with his Ziff-Davis purchase. Now Wall Street is asking what's next.

BY MARIE BRENNER

TED FORSTMANN is a man of deals. He buys and sells companies and bets on price spreads—the wholesale purchase price of companies against their future retail sale. On the morning of last October 28th, I waited for him in his conference room, high above Central Park in the General Motors Building. That day, Forstmann Little, a leveraged-buyout firm, had announced the purchase of the computer-magazine empire Ziff-Davis, for a hefty $1.4 billion.

Immediately, people in the city began looking for subtexts in the purchase. For one thing, Forstmann, who had invested $900 million of his firm's own equity, had used up his current venture-capital fund and needed to raise another pool of capital. A larger message for Wall Street was that Forstmann, who was not taken seriously through much of the nineteen-eighties, was coming closer to a position of financial power; he is now in a far more advantageous situation than many of the high rollers funded by the junk bonds issued without apparent reservation by Drexel Burnham Lambert and Michael Milken.

For some financial editors and reporters, the implicit message was that Forstmann, a man who used to position himself publicly against the financier Henry Kravis and has often been portrayed as a caricature—the actor who played him in "Barbarians at the Gate" shrieked that junk bonds were "wampum"—might ultimately attempt to use the Ziff-Davis technology to achieve political goals. The Ziff-Davis deal, the largest in Forstmann Little's history, had been worked out in secret over a weekend when the British press was linking Forstmann romantically with the Princess of Wales, and his office had been under siege for two days. On the telephone, Forstmann told me, "I work my ass off all week and what does the *Evening Post* say about me but 'Friend of Di's has a busy week.' How do I get this gossip to stop?" In the financial press, rhetorical questions were posed to advance a narrative: Had Ted Forstmann now pulled ahead of Henry Kravis? Did Forstmann intend to become a right-wing publisher, like the Canadian press lord Conrad Black? Or had he simply been hoodwinked by the Ziff family into overpaying?

TOM BACHTELL

Forstmann: "On Wall Street, they now say, 'He is certainly not one of us.' But that is who I am."

FORSTMANN, who is fifty-four, has an athlete's physique, a deep, rumbling voice, and a nimbus of tweed hair. In photographs, he flattens out and appears to resemble a guileful Tony Ben-

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nett with a tan; in person, he is unmistakably a salesman, with a notorious bravado. He also has a tendency to be self-absorbed. (His conversation is filled with references to himself as a man of ideas.) But the approval of his peers has always eluded him. Here is vintage Forstmann: "If you are counterintuitive, which I definitely am, and if you are countercyclical (see, everything I say sounds like an ad!), ideas and principles mean a whole lot more than what people think. Conventional wisdom on every subject I find irritating and wrong." Forstmann's personality is a paradox: he is a man of expansive gestures with the interior landscape of a Puritan. He's exuberant, but there is an aura of discontent about him—an odd psychology for a salesman whose fortunes rest on his abilities to impart confidence.

The office is quiet on the morning that the purchase of Ziff-Davis is announced. A small collection of Lucite "tombstones" commemorating Forstmann Little deals sits on a windowsill. One commemorates the acquisition of the Dr Pepper Corporation, which Forstmann Little bought in 1984. I first met Forstmann around that time; there was a certain jauntiness about him then—a whiff of self-mockery. A story from this period has him walking down Madison Avenue with his younger brother Nick. It was Nick Forstmann who knew the way around the banks and the tax laws of 1984; having worked for Morgan Bank and Henry Kravis, he had now thrown in with his more freewheeling older brother to help structure the Forstmann Little deals. Nick, cautious and worried, accosted Ted on the sidewalk: "Do you realize that we have just signed for five hundred million dollars in credit, Teddy? Do you realize that we are hardly launched and we have now agreed to pay the banks five hundred million dollars for Dr Pepper? We don't have any money! What are we going to do?" Retelling this anecdote recently, Forstmann recalled, "I said to him, 'Nicky, really. Money is all a state of mind. It's just zeros. Besides, I am convinced that Dr Pepper is a fabulous deal.' " Two years later, Dr Pepper earned $247 million for Forstmann Little's equity investors—more than eight times their investment.

Arbitrageurs and commodities traders sometimes have a run of intuition, and then the scene shifts and they lose the music. Forstmann has earned his reputation as a financier as much for his nature as for his accomplishments. For years, people would smile when Forstmann started a spiel that one of his bankers now refers to as the Junk Bond Thing. Its theme was, in brief, "The world has gone crazy, junk bonds will bankrupt American business." During the eighties, Forstmann was often given to displays of temper. He appeared to need an adversary and frequently made comments like "Henry Kravis makes me sick" or, referring to the former head of Shearson Lehman, "Peter Cohen is the enemy."

For Forstmann, the defining moment of the eighties came during a ferocious battle for the acquisition of Revlon. The hostile bidder, Ronald Perelman, who was then the chairman of the Pantry Pride grocery chain, had invited Forstmann to a meeting. The two men were competing for control of the company. In Forstmann's view, he was a savior who had been promised control of Revlon by the chairman, Michel Bergerac. In Perelman's view, Bergerac was playing favorites at the expense of the Revlon shareholders, allowing his personal animus to prevent him from acting responsibly toward them. At this point in the rivalry, Forstmann had been granted a lockup agreement for the company by the Revlon board and had access to the Revlon financial statements. Forstmann recalls that at the meeting, on October 9, 1985, he told Perelman, "Jeez, Ron. You don't know much about the company." According to Forstmann, Perelman said, "Well, I do. I know what you are paying, and I am just going to keep bidding a quarter more than whatever you bid." Forstmann continues, "And I said, 'Suppose I take you into bankruptcy.' And he said, 'You won't, because you are not going to bid more than the company is worth.' " Perelman suggested that they split up the company, an offer Forstmann declined.

In an address to the Revlon board, Forstmann indicated that he and a majority of the Revlon directors viewed Perelman as a common enemy. The board went along with Forstmann, and accepted his bid. But in November of 1985 the Supreme Court of Delaware ruled in Perelman's favor, declaring, "When bidders make relatively similar offers . . . the directors cannot fulfill their duties by playing favorites."

For Forstmann, Perelman's victory was "a watershed moment in American corporate history." It meant, he told me recently, "that anyone could come out of nowhere and take over a huge company." But Forstmann has muted the rhetoric of his anti-junk-bond crusade since those days. He now says, "Ron is a guy who's done extremely well, and he handled himself well in the Revlon deal. It was a good buy, and he got it."

Forstmann can afford to be magnanimous. Since 1978, Forstmann Little has bought eighteen companies, including the Union Ice Company of San Francisco (eventually sold for fifteen times the equity invested); Lear Siegler, an industrial conglomerate (bought for two hundred million dollars and yet to be sold); General Instruments, a leader in the digital-cable field; and Gulfstream, a manufacturer of private jets. Forstmann says of himself, "On Wall Street, they now say, 'He is certainly not one of us.' But that is who I am."

In an interview with me in 1984, Forstmann spoke of "active" and "passive" riches, and the notion of "creating value" through the use of the leveraged buyout—a means of buying companies by putting up relatively small amounts of money. Like others in that bull market, Forstmann had begun to make money in the nineteen-eighties, when Wall Street was awash in liquidity. The seemliest investors attributed their acumen to luck; Forstmann, however, was trying to work his way toward a theory of capitalism, and he often sounded obnoxious. "The national consciousness has got to start thinking that wealth is good," he said then. "The leveraged buyout has been done since Socrates. Any time you went to anyone to borrow anything to acquire something, you could call that an LBO. Real wealth is a property of the mind."

Now, more than a decade later, Forstmann is sprawled in a peach armchair, his legs on the armrest. The fatigue may be theatrical, since the acquisition of Ziff-Davis was worked out preëmptively. "I looked at four hundred deals in the last two years and bought nothing," he says. "If you include Ziff-

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Davis and a division of Kodak we have just bought, so far we have bought only six companies in the nineteen-nineties. Let me see. Let me count this on my fingers." He totted up the purchase prices of his completed deals. "That's five billion dollars. And the common wisdom is that things are supposed to be tough in the nineteen-nineties."

According to one of his competitors, "In the orbit of the financial world, Forstmann is an opinionated entrepreneur, but he has been right a good deal more than he has been wrong." Even Forstmann's critics admit that, despite his braggadocio, he has faultless honesty in his personal dealings. In 1985, he attempted to buy MTV, which was then owned by Warner Communications. The deal had been brought to him by David Horowitz, one of MTV's founders. Forstmann recalls, "We went to see Steve Ross"—the chairman of Warner—"and we had a lot of unpleasant meetings with him. He had his ways and style, which was always lavish." Ross, according to Forstmann, kept changing the terms of every arrangement. "He would say, 'I want to keep twenty per cent.' I'd say, 'O.K., you can keep twenty per cent.' He'd say, 'I want a seat on the board.' 'O.K., you can have a seat.' Once, he came back with an outrageous demand about David Horowitz. He didn't want him to get stock or something, and I remember saying to Ross, 'Am I buying this company, or are you? It is up to me how to compensate Horowitz.' I said, 'There is no way I can even talk to you about this. David came to us with the idea.' And Ross said, 'Well, then, fuck you.' And the next day he sold it to Viacom. Horowitz was in my office during the negotiation, and he kept saying to me, 'Cut me loose,' and I said, 'Cut you loose, my ass!' "

Annual reports and charts are little more than snapshots of a financial moment, and it is possible to calculate investments in many different ways, but what is not malleable is the computation of a yearly rate of return. There is no question, according to *Fortune*, that since the early eighties Forstmann Little's rate of return for its institutional investors has been far superior to that of Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts, its longtime rival: the return to Henry Kravis's major investors has barely outpaced the performance of the Standard & Poor stock-market index, while the return to Forstmann's major clients has more than doubled the S. & P. index.

"By the year 2000, almost every magazine you read will be interactive," Eric Hippeau, the president of Ziff-Davis, tells me when I visit his company. In the Ziff-Davis computer lab, Michael Miller, the editor of *PC*, an adheavy magazine that has more than a million subscribers, is testing laptops for a consumer feature in an upcoming issue. Their screens blink and emit tiny squawking sounds. Miller defines himself as a computer wonk; his office is stacked high with software. Recently at lunch, he sat next to Forstmann, whom he had never met. Miller attempted to explain the possibilities of interactive publishing for computer specialists. Forstmann listened politely and then said, "I haven't understood a single word you've said."

According to Forstmann, the barnstorming for Ziff-Davis began at a cocktail party, when he met Dirk Ziff, the thirty-year-old son of William Ziff, the founder. Dirk Ziff complimented Forstmann on his business skills and chatted about some ideas of his own. By coincidence, Ziff-Davis's bankers had scheduled a presentation soon afterward, to talk about the company. "I never go to these things," Forstmann says, but, because of Ziff, he did wander in. "I was so fascinated I stayed for six hours," he recalls. Forstmann has never learned computer technology, but he saw that Ziff-Davis commanded more than half the market in its field.

Soon after the acquisition was announced, one trade magazine theorized that Forstmann had purchased Ziff-Davis in order to compete with K.K.R.'s magazine properties, which include *New York* and *Seventeen*. It is Forstmann's practice, however, to view investments in terms of cash flow; his investors are mostly pension-fund managers, who justify their salaries by showing high returns, not by acting as handmaidens to ambition. Although Forstmann certainly paid a high price for Ziff-Davis—approximately ten times the cash flow—one investment banker concedes that "it was pricey, but not totally off the wall." When I ask Forstmann about the price, he replies, "They said the same things about General Instruments and Dr Pepper. It is the usual clichés. 'This is the dumbest deal.' Why didn't seventeen people that Felix Rohatyn"—the Lazard Frères dealmaker—"showed Dr Pepper to bid a dime? I think Ziff-Davis is a great company. Far greater than General Instruments. People told me that I paid too much for General Instruments. The market value for General Instruments is now six billion"—as opposed to its purchase price, $1.75 billion, in 1990. "After taking it public, we own thirty-two per cent of it. A huge home run!"

According to Steven Rattner, a Lazard Frères partner who represented Ziff-Davis, Forstmann's skill is "visceral and reactive. He's got a hell of a feel for what works and doesn't work from his point of view." In meetings, Rattner says, Forstmann is often impatient. "There are times when I think he's thinking, Why am I listening to this?" Forstmann was so eager to make the Ziff-Davis deal that in a single afternoon he raised his bid by hundreds of millions of dollars. Rattner says, "We walked in and Teddy said, 'Let me tell you where I am at.' "

Forstmann is often quoted in the business press talking about his need to find a company that is dominant in the marketplace. He looks for companies that have "barriers to entry"—a financial term that means the company is so dominant that it can keep other companies from coming into the marketplace. "Recently, I bought a company from Kodak called Thompson-Minwax," he told me. "The company has seventy per cent of the market, because of the good advertising it did." If a company has barriers to entry, he continued, "it means that you can do your thing without fear of some competitor entering the market and making what you bought worth a lot less. . . . *PC* magazine and the other Ziff-Davis magazines pose a serious barrier to entry. Theoretically, Ziff-Davis will have a better chance of making interactive magazines work than the next guy."

At Forstmann's apartment, on Fifth Avenue, it was late Saturday afternoon, and, as was his custom, he had

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spent the day with cronies playing golf at the Deepdale Club, on Long Island. His apartment, like his office, had the appearance of a rich man's stage set—no clutter, hardly any signs of domestic life. By his bed, there were several biographies of St. Paul—his reading obsession at the time. In his dressing room, there was a photograph of his current girlfriend, an acting student named Deborah Hagerty. Forstmann has been named to the "Hopeless But Hey You Never Know" bachelors list of *Quest*. He says he broods about a lack of any sense of emotional permanence in his life. Recently, he asked one of his closest friends from childhood, "How can I be so good at some things and so bad at others?" As for the romance with the Princess of Wales trumpeted by the tabloids, Forstmann says she was merely his dinner partner in London and Washington. "I was flattered that she had read up on me," he adds. "We talked about refugees mostly, and my work in Bosnia. After dinner at Jacob Rothschild's, she asked me to escort her to a party Conrad Black was having at Annabel's. It was clear that she was going to be used as a prop. When we came out of the dinner, there was a blinding display of flashbulbs. I thought it was actually dangerous. I feel sorry for her. It is so not a normal life."

To some observers, Forstmann and his older brother, Tony, often seem frozen in an era of deb balls at the Plaza—a time when preppie young men were accompanied by leggy blondes in strapless black velvet dresses. Tony, Ted, and Nick Forstmann have houses near each other in Southampton. One neighbor has nicknamed this area "the camp," because of the frequent sounds of tennis balls. Of the three brothers, Ted is the least hidden and the most volatile. To Ted, Tony is "the great-looking guy whom everybody notices when he walks into the room. I'm the one who sort of slumps in." Tony, who has a venture-capital business based in California, has six children from four marriages "and all kinds of ideas for businesses, some successful, some not," Ted says. Currently, Tony is developing a fingerprinting company called The National Registry. Nick, Ted says, "is the nicest one of us," and has a smoothness that helps Forstmann Little in dealings with its bankers. (Another younger brother, John, is in the real-estate business in Washington, D.C.) For one observer, "Teddy is the brother who sucks the oxygen out of any room he enters," the powerful sibling who has pushed his brothers off the stage.

Among Forstmann's friends, the accepted word for him is "complicated." He is rare among financiers in that his business associates seek to explain his driven nature and emotional isolation by speculating about his childhood. His art collection may hold a clue: in one corner of his living room, along with a van Gogh drawing and a Modigliani, is a portrait of a young boy by Soutine. The boy appears morose, but he is rendered without sentiment, and suggests a nature at once sad and aggressive. When I asked Forstmann about the portrait, he said, "That painting just called out to me. I guess when I looked at him I saw myself."

Forstmann grew up in a mansion in Greenwich, Connecticut, with its own baseball diamond, tennis courts, and swimming pool. He was the second son in a family of six children. The Forstmanns were one of the richest families in America—one family friend remembers the house as "a paradise," and recalls seeing the whole family playing cards or throwing baseballs around the lawn—but the reality of their lives was obscured by appearances. According to Forstmann, his childhood was spent in an atmosphere of terror.

Ted's paternal grandfather, Julius, weighed three hundred pounds and dominated the family. A devout Lutheran, he had brought his woollens-manufacturing business from Germany to America in 1906. Ten years later, Forstmann Woollens was the finest woollen mill in the country, and gave the country the color olive drab for its uniforms, but anti-German sentiment brought on by the First World War caused the family to spend large amounts of time isolated at a country retreat in the Catskills. According to "Harvest of Dreams," a family memoir that Ted's mother, Dorothy Forstmann Sammis, later wrote, the grandfather's sons became heavy drinkers and were not allowed to participate in American life. Their father was contemptuous of American colleges, calling them "pleasure palaces." Instead of allowing Ted's father, also named Julius, to attend col-

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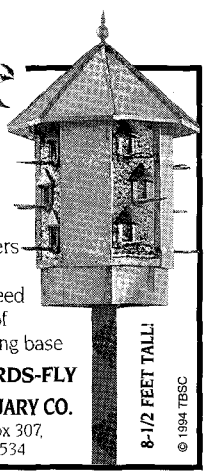
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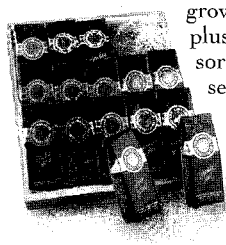
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lege, the senior Julius insisted that the boy accompany him on his yacht, the Orion, on a trip around the world. In Europe, he saw unsold goods stockpiled in factories. When he returned, in October of 1929, he instructed his broker to liquidate his portfolio.

According to Ted, the junior Julius was frequently ridiculed because he had acute vision problems, and taunted as the "*glotzer*"—the weak-eyed one. He met Dorothy, an Italian-American Sarah Lawrence student and an observant Catholic, one night at a party. In her memoir she recalls the senior Forstmann's reaction as immediate and severe: "Where I come from, the Protestant walks on one side of the street and the Papist on the other." He accused her of financial opportunism and forbade the marriage. Young Julius defied his father and was immediately disowned. He began to drink heavily. Later, after the birth of his first child, Tony, Julius was brought back into the woollen mill, and eventually took the family business over, but his relationship with his father was always cold.

Bookish and gentle on his best days, Ted's father was prone to breakdowns and violence brought on by pills and alcohol. All through Ted's childhood, Julius Forstmann was in and out of sanitariums. "When my father was not drinking, he was a very sweet, gentle, very smart guy," Forstmann says. "But everything was always in parts, because if you went on his boat with him, you were petrified you might never come back. The first thing I can remember is that I wanted to be strong enough to take care of my mother. You feel very guilty that this is going on, and you are scared."

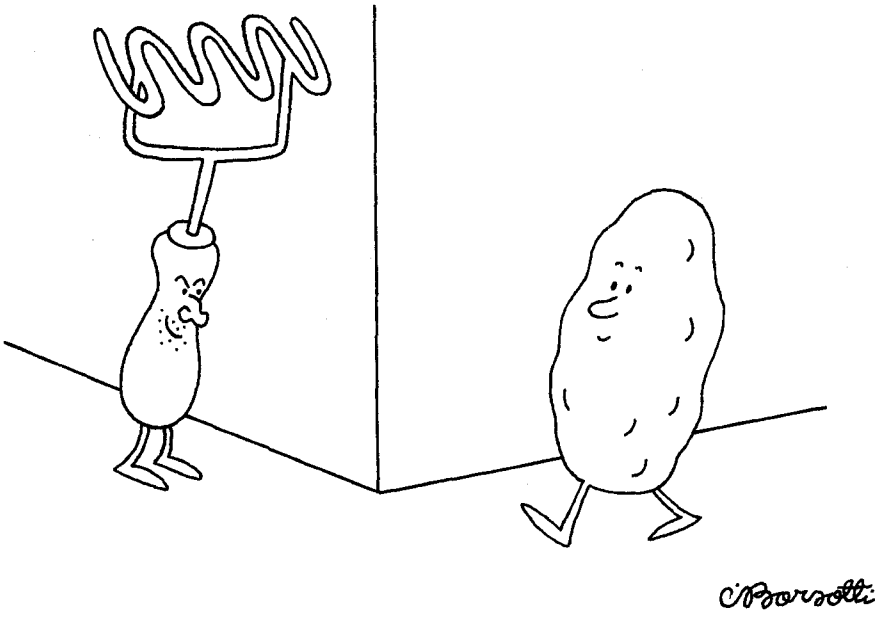
Forstmann describes his relationship with his mother in a curious monotone. A woman who has known the family well believes that Dorothy found her firstborn son, Tony, the more affectionate of her two oldest children and often reached out to him for companionship and guidance as her husband's behavior became increasingly erratic. According to Ted, "Tony was the one who actually took on my father and confronted him at the table. I withdrew." Later, he remarked, "One of the things that my mother would say was 'It's going to be better.' The reality component was not there. I think it is very fair to say all of us were very mixed up by this whole thing."

There were other difficulties. "We weren't at all accepted by the Forstmanns, and then—my mother will die to read this—we were not accepted at all in Greenwich. This is probably where the rumor comes from that my family is Jewish. My older brother and I related to the Italian thing. I don't think any of us felt any part of the Forstmann family or history. We kind of X'd it out. My father had a driver, and he went to the mills every day. And every night, I remember, you were supposed to have dinner with your mother and father, and you would sit there waiting, waiting, and waiting, and you would never know what would walk through the door." Forstmann's view of himself in this period is of a silent little boy, living in his own world by the age of eight, thinking about the Brooklyn Dodgers and playing imaginary games. According to Tony, Ted was usually "out on the porch, away from everyone, reading Classics comic books." Eventually, he went off to Andover, and then to Yale.

In 1961, shortly after Ted graduated from Yale, his father had a final breakdown. He fought violently with Ted and Ted's younger brother John, then threatened Dorothy with a gun. Several days later, he called Ted to apologize. He agreed to return to the sanitarium permanently, but soon died of a heart attack. He was fifty-one.

THE Forstmann estate turned out to be far smaller than the family had anticipated. "I think my life at this early age was a question of survival," Ted Forstmann recalls. "It was a bit hard to develop a sense of self under the circumstances. I had no money. The wool mills were finished." Forstmann Woollens had lost its dominance; other, newer competitors had taken market share, and Forstmann's father had been forced to sell out to J. P. Stevens. "My trust fund paid me five hundred dollars a month, and my apartment rent, at Seventy-fourth and Third Avenue, was five hundred dollars a month, and I used to always pick up the check for dinner," Forstmann recalls. He developed a useful tool for a future financier: he became an aggressive cardplayer. In the mornings, he attended classes at Columbia Law School; in the afternoons, he gambled with friends. "One night," he recalls, "I lost ten thousand dollars at gin. I remember walking out of the place at six in the morning and seeing a street-sweeper and thinking that the easiest thing in the world to do would be to throw myself under this thing. After I lost all that money, I went right back into the big gin game and won eleven thousand dollars."

After law school, Forstmann "kicked around" in a series of jobs at small investment banks, like Estabrook & Company. This period of his life he now describes as "the toughest." In the eyes of Forstmann's friend the writer Michael Thomas, Ted was "a guy you would see hanging around rich people playing golf at Deepdale, hoping someone would throw him a bone, cut him in on a deal."



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"Before kindergarten, I was into that whole downtown nursery-school scene."

• •

At thirty-five, he was out of work and unattached, ambitious, and yearning. In contrast, Tony Forstmann seemed set for life: he had married the heiress Charlotte Ford. Ted says, "Tony paid me a couple of thousand dollars a month to help out at his money-management firm, Forstmann Leff."

While Forstmann was at Estabrook, he had worked on a public offering of Graham Magnetics, a Texas manufacturer of zero-defect reel-to-reel tape. He was rewarded with a seat on the board. After Estabrook closed, in 1973, Forstmann believed it was the right time to sell the company, but he had no credible venue to operate from. Working at home at first, he recalls, he told his brother's receptionist, "If you will help me out, if this deal happens, I will buy you a fur coat." The story goes on, "So she would answer the telephone, 'Forstmann Leff,' and someone would say, 'Ted Forstmann,' and she would say, 'I'm sorry, he's out,' and then she would call me at home. It was the ultimate hustle! I did the goddam deal. I made about two hundred thousand dollars! I sent her a ten-thousand-dollar fur coat." One day at the Deepdale Club, he met the industrialist Derald Ruttenberg, the head of Studebaker-Worthington. For Forstmann, the meeting was prophetic. "A year or two later, I had this idea about buying companies. All I wanted was to be able to pay the rent and my dues at Deepdale. I knew inflation was rampant. You could buy something with a predictable cash flow. You could borrow the money and put in a little equity and it's like real-estate financing in business. Ruttenberg said to me, 'Is this what you really want to do?' And I said yes. So he concocted the toughest deal ever. He said, 'Find nine other guys and I will be the lead guy and we will put up four hundred thousand dollars a year for two years, and you cannot get a dime until we each get our money back."

It took Forstmann a year and a half to find a company he wanted to buy. At first, he recalls, it was " 'Forstmann who?' Slam. I remember thinking, How am I going to get this done?" By then, he had two experienced partners. "We wanted to do something entrepreneurial," Nick Forstmann says. The other partner was Brian Little, who had trained in corporate finance at White Weld. Tall and affable, Little was the analytical talent of the partnership—"the straw that stirs the drink," in the opinion of one financial reporter. (In 1993, to the surprise of Wall Street, Little reduced his role, giving up his general partnership. One friend of both men says, "His partners tire of the Teddy Forstmann show. He is like a ten-kilowatt sun. I think Brian thought he couldn't make any more money than he already had.")

Finally, in 1980, another golf acquaintance told Forstmann about the Kincaid Furniture Company, in North Carolina. "Kincaid was like Ziff-Davis, doing something better than the other companies," Forstmann explains. "They made furniture out of solid wood, where most people used chipboard." According to Nick Forstmann, "Ted, Brian, and I flew down and met Wade Kincaid. We offered him seventeen million dollars and shook hands. Three days later, Kincaid called us and said, 'Some fellers were down here and offered me twenty million dollars.' Believe me, those were the days when we hovered by the telephone in a panic. We didn't know what was going to happen. And Wade Kincaid said, 'I told the men to get out of my office—I had already shaken your hand.' " According to Forstmann, each of his investors made fourteen times his money when the partners ultimately took Kincaid public.

Kincaid Furniture, like many of the early LBOs, was a bonanza brought on by the ability to leverage, thanks to the loosening credit market. "With Kincaid, we put up two million dollars of the seventeen-million purchase price," Forstmann says. "Let's say we paid off eight or nine million of the debt with the cash flow from the company. A few years later, we got twenty-eight million for our two million dollars of equity."

On Wall Street, Forstmann Little was taken seriously after its 1984 acquisition of the Dr Pepper Company—the deal that seventeen companies turned down. "With Dr Pepper, remember, everyone said, 'This is the stupidest deal ever done,' " Forstmann recalls. "*Forbes* said that this was the dumbest deal in the history of the world." Forstmann's own investors were

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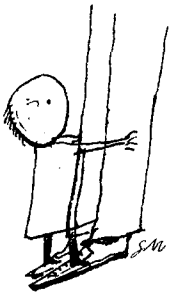
worried. Six weeks after his first, $250-million fund closed, Forstmann Little had spent all the money on Dr Pepper and Topps Chewing Gum, the baseball-card company. One pension manager called Forstmann a fraud and demanded his money back.

According to his lawyer, Stephen Fraidin, Forstmann saw Dr Pepper as a very valuable syrup business, because of the singular flavor. It was floundering because of its attempts at expanding to compete with Coca-Cola. Dr Pepper had six or seven per cent of the market and its owners wanted more. Fraidin recalls, "Teddy said to them, 'Why do that? Why not do what you do the best, which is to be Dr Pepper.' " Forstmann insisted that they dispose of their bottling plants and all the other companies that were dragging down their profits. To his angry investors Forstmann said, according to Fraidin, "Just you wait. I am not a fraud." According to Nick Forstmann, "We put ten million dollars into the equity of Topps, which turned into a company valued at seven hundred million and it took two years."



Ted Forstmann has long maintained that what he does to acquire companies is wholly unrelated to egregious debt financing of the kind practiced by Mike Milken and Drexel Burnham Lambert—a spin that is not exactly true but is not entirely untrue. He has cast himself in a white hat, but the actual shade is closer to pearl gray. The Forstmann Little form of financing has been called by one reporter "junk bonds in a coat and tie." Forstmann, like his competitors, is operating with hundreds of millions of dollars of debt, but his structure allows for, among other things, a longer payback period for the Forstmann Little companies. In practice, this means that Ziff-Davis, for instance, may have time to develop the interactive networks for its publications without being crippled by the need to make high interest payments on corporate debt.

According to Jim Grant, the publisher of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer*, Forstmann has engineered a useful bit of corporate finance. "It has always been the custom of the leveraged-buyout investor to borrow money—the 'L' in LBO means debt," Grant told me. "What Ted pioneered was a more forgiving capital structure. Companies borrowed at relatively low interest rates, but, more important than that, they didn't have to begin paying off until eleven years had passed. Forstmann introduced the concept of the equivalent of a long-dated mortgage—no amortization for eleven years." Low-interest money, called subordinated debt, was a concept that had been used for years by large insurance companies, but Forstmann refined the idea by creating his own pool of capital, acquired from pension funds. In effect, he was his own Drexel Burnham, but without the Milken-era junk-bond interest rates or banking fees.

In one corner of Forstmann's conference room there is a peaceful model village with snow-covered chalets, and Forstmann's visitors tend to stare into this strange world where it is perpetually Christmas. Department 56, which he acquired in 1992, is the dominant purveyor of porcelain miniatures in the country. A Minneapolis company, it began as a specialty-import wholesaler seventeen years ago. "A craftsman brought a Victorian cookie jar to me shaped like a house," the company's chairman, Ed Bazinet, told me. "I would like to be able to tell you that seventeen years ago I predicted clubs of porcelain collectors and the families that would seize on these villages, but that isn't exactly the case." Forstmann Little came into Department 56—another broker brought it to Forstmann's attention—when the original family of shareholders was thinking of buying Bazinet out. When Forstmann learned that the company had a dominant market share, he went after it. In general, Forstmann does not re-sculpt the companies he buys. "Ted leaves us completely alone to do our thing," Ed Bazinet told me. "We talk to him every six weeks or so."

What remains to be seen is how Forstmann's recent deals will pan out. Forstmann Little bought Gulfstream, essentially a maker of luxury aircraft, in 1990, at a time when corporations were downsizing. The company cost $850 million. According to Jim Grant, many people in the business community wondered, Is this the right thing to do? Are you supposed to buy corporate jets when corporations are conspicuously firing people and not flying the surviving executives around in aircraft? Over the past year, Forstmann changed the top management several times and eventually named himself chairman, and ever since he has been involved directly in a campaign to sell C.E.O.s the new GV, a private jet that can fly from New York to Tokyo without a refuelling stop. There is also the matter of the Pullman Corporation, an investment that Forstmann now says "we would have been a lot better off not to have made." The company had long been out of sleeping cars; it was a conglomerate of auto-component manufacturers. Pullman cost $670 million, and Forstmann Little's investors are likely to lose $315 million after the banks are paid.

In 1980, Jude Wanniski's "The Way the World Works" turned Forstmann toward politics. "It was an epiphany for me," Forstmann says. "Wanniski talked about how the élites always think that people are stupid, and he thinks that people are always right. He said that people want an eagle to lead them, but usually a chicken is running against a duck. And I thought, The guy is absolutely right."

Through Wanniski, Forstmann met Congressman Jack Kemp, with whom he joined the crusade against the capital-gains tax. Forstmann funded a think tank called Empower America, whose co-directors include Kemp, William Bennett, and Jeane Kirkpatrick. (Newt Gingrich, whom Forstmann particularly admires and is close to, is a board member.) Now a man of forums and honorary degrees, Forstmann often invites presidents of his companies and other C.E.O.s to Aspen, Colorado, for a yearly conference; this year, it featured Colin Powell and George Shultz.

A leather scrapbook in Forstmann's office contains photographs of children who were maimed in Bosnia and of dozens of young men and women in hospital beds, many covered with bandages. In the last two years, Forstmann has made three trips to the former Yugoslavia and has given a million dollars' worth of medical supplies to a clinic in Mostar, in the middle of the fighting, and he has also quietly gone about arranging

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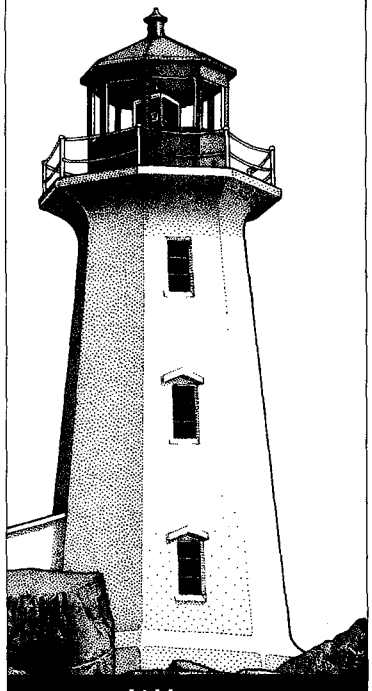
several private rescue missions: he has found jobs for Russians and has brought families from Yugoslavia to work in his companies. ("Now that Mike Milken is finished, Teddy can attack the Serbs," one banker joked.) He was recently honored by the International Rescue Committee for the millions of dollars in supplies he has helped to send to Bosnia. In this project he was aided by other businessmen, but it was Forstmann who took the spotlight, riding with a convoy carrying relief supplies into Mostar.

On the day Forstmann announced his purchase of Ziff-Davis, he stood in front of his desk showing off a display of other deal souvenirs. Near him on a bookcase was a framed letter from George Bush, on Camp David stationery, which read, "Dear Ted, You were right about the capital gains tax on the Op Ed page recently. All best." Turning to me, Forstmann said, "You should have been here yesterday. Colin Powell was here." Suddenly, he picked up a plastic gizmo from his desk. "Look at this. You want to talk about how far I have come? This was one of my first deals. A disaster. It was some kind of weird recording tape." He held it up to the light. "Look at it. A man I was involved with sent it to me a few months ago with a note—'Never, ever, ever forget your roots.' "

I followed Forstmann out of the office and into an elevator. In the lobby of the General Motors Building, the music from F. A. O. Schwarz reverberated from the floor; it was as if Forstmann and I were standing inside a cuckoo clock. Forstmann lingered. I expected him to return to the subject of Ziff-Davis, but instead he brought up again a story he had told me at lunch. It concerned his years at Yale, where he had been a gifted hockey goalie. During his junior year, his team voted for a captain. The coach took him aside and said, "You are the star of the team. But you did not get one vote for captain. Not one." In the lobby, Forstmann said to me, "I have never had a neutral zone. My brother Nicky has it. My brother Tony has it. I don't. If you came up the way I did, you'd want to be approved. In print, that looks kind of pathetic, but in your heart it feels very real." ♦

Cruise The Scenic Northeast Passage



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A NEUROLOGIST'S NOTEBOOK

PRODIGIES

Can an artist make art without feeling it? The question is a central mystery surrounding autistic savants: children who show no emotion in life but whose creative brilliance would seem to demand it. The story of Stephen Wiltshire, an English boy who rarely laughed or played but drew exquisite scenes of cities and streets, exemplifies the paradox.

BY OLIVER SACKS

THE Fayetteville, North Carolina, *Observer* of May 19, 1862, contained an unusual letter from its correspondent Long Grabs, stationed in Camp Mangum:

> The blind negro Tom has been performing here to a crowded house. He is certainly a wonder. . . . He resembles any ordinary negro boy 13 years old and is perfectly blind and is an idiot in everything but music, language, and imitation, and perhaps memory. . . . He has never been instructed in music or educated in any way. He learned to play the piano from hearing others, learns airs and tunes from hearing them sung, and can play any piece on first trial as well as the most accomplished performer. . . . One of his most remarkable feats was the performance of three pieces of music at once. He played Fisher's Hornpipe with one hand and Yankee Doodle with the other and sang Dixie all at once. I could distinctly hear and understand each. He also played a piece with his back to the piano and his hands inverted. He performs many pieces of his own conception—one, his "Battle of Manassas," may be called *picturesque* and sublime—a true conception of unaided, blind musical genius. . . . This poor blind boy is cursed with but little of human nature; he seems to be an unconscious agent acting as he is acted on, and his mind a vacant receptacle where Nature stores her jewels to recall them at her pleasure.

We learn more of Blind Tom from Edward Seguin, a French physician whose 1866 book "Idiocy and Its Treatment by the Psychological Method" contained many penetrating descriptions of individuals later to be termed "idiot savants"; and from an intellectual descendant of Seguin, Darold Treffert, whose book "Extraordinary People: Understanding 'Idiot Savants' " was published in 1989. Born nearly blind, the fourteenth child of a slave, sold to a Colonel Bethune, Tom was, from infancy, Treffert writes, "fascinated by

Stephen Wiltshire

sounds of all sorts—rain on the roof, the grating of corn in the sheller, but most of all music—Tom would listen intensely to the colonel's daughters practicing their sonatas and minuets on the piano."

"Till five or six years old," Seguin writes, "he could not speak, scarce walk, and gave no other sign of intelligence than this everlasting thirst for music. At four years already, if taken out from the corner where he lay dejected, and seated at the piano, he would play beautiful tunes; his little hands having already taken possession of the keys, and his wonderful ear of any combination of notes they had once heard." At the age of six, Tom started to improvise. Word of the "blind genius" spread, and at seven Tom gave his first concert—and went on to earn a hundred thousand dollars in his eighth year. At eleven, he played before President Buchanan at the White House. A panel of musicians, who thought that he had tricked the President, tested his memory the following day, playing two entirely new compositions to him, thirteen and twenty pages in length; he reproduced them perfectly, and without the least apparent effort.

Seguin, describing Tom listening to a new piece, adds further tantalizing details in regard to his expressions, postures, and movements:

> [He] shows his satisfaction by his countenance, a laughing, stooping, with various rubbings of the hand, alternating with an increase of the sideway swinging of his body, and some uncouth smiles. As soon as the new tune begins, Tom takes some ludicrous posture [with one leg outstretched, while he slowly pirouettes on the other] . . . long gyrations . . . ornamented with spasmodic movements of the hands.

Although Tom was usually called an idiot or imbecile, such posturing and stereotypies are more characteristic of autism—but autism was identified only in the nineteen-forties, and was not a term, or even a concept, in the eighteen-sixties.

SUCH singular talents, usually emerging at a very early age and developing with startling speed, in minds or personalities otherwise deeply defective, appear in about ten per cent of the autistic (and in a smaller number of the retarded, though many savants are both autistic and retarded).

Prodigious calculators attracted attention in the eighteenth century; Jedediah Buxton, a simpleminded laborer, had perhaps the most tenacious memory of these. When asked what would be the cost of shoeing a horse with a hundred and forty nails if the price was one farthing for the first nail,

Wiltshire drew his "London Alphabet" at ten and St. Mark's in Venice at fifteen. When, two years later, his "Floating Cities" became a best-seller in England, he said, "Very nice," but seemed unmoved by his success.

ISADORE SELTZER

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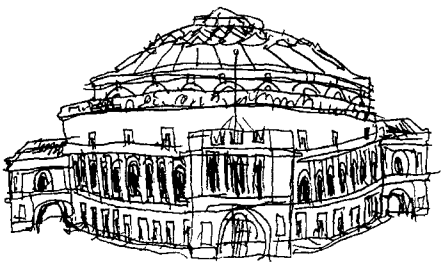
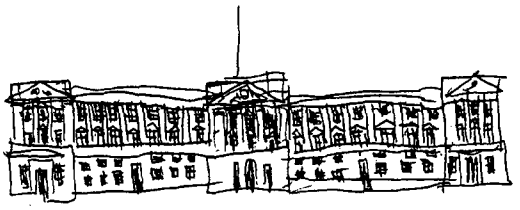
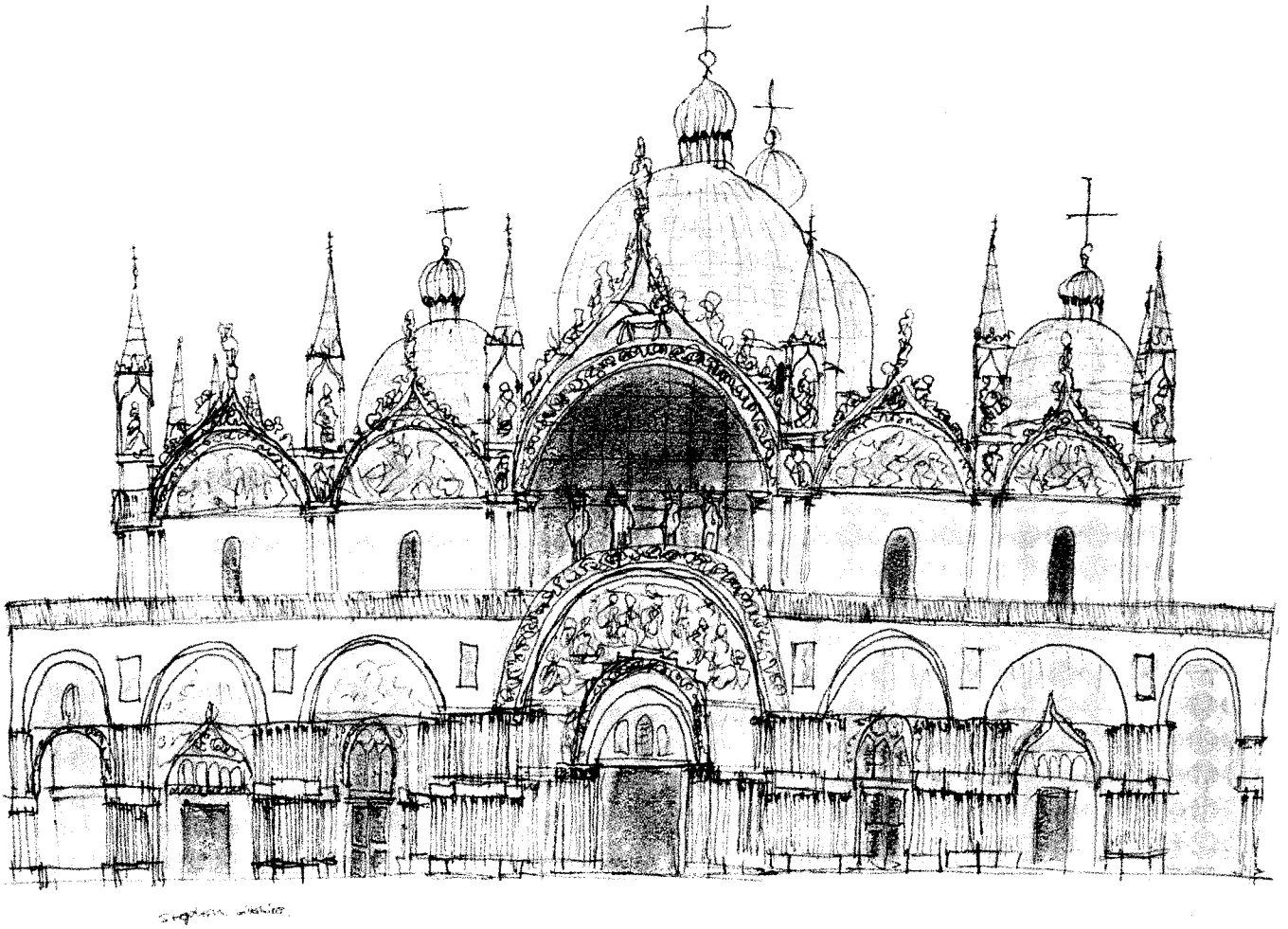


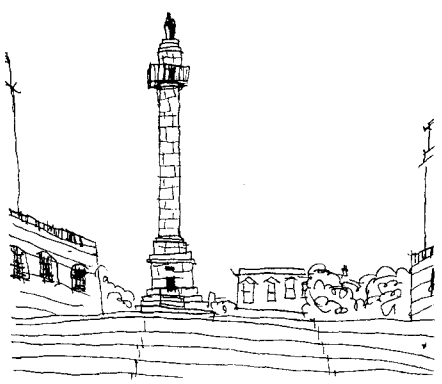
A is for Albert Hall



B is for Buckingham Palace

C is for County Hall





D is for Duke of York Steps

E is for Eros

F is for Festival Hall

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then doubled for each remaining nail, he arrived at the (nearly correct) figure of 725, 958, 096, 074, 907, 868, 531, 656, 993, 638, 851, 106 pounds, two shillings, and eight pence. When he was then asked to square this number (that is, 2^{139} squared), he came up with (after two and a half months) a seventy-eight-digit answer. Though some of Buxton's calculations took weeks or months, he was able to work, to hold conversations—to live his life normally—while doing them. The prodigious calculations proceeded almost automatically, throwing their results into consciousness only when completed.

Child prodigies, of course, are not necessarily retarded or autistic. There have been itinerant calculators of normal intelligence as well. One such was George Parker Bidder, who as a child and youth gave exhibitions in England and Scotland. He could mentally determine the logarithm of any number to seven or eight places, and, apparently intuitively, divine the factors for any large number. Bidder retained his powers throughout his life (and, indeed, made great use of them in his profession as an engineer) and often tried to delineate the procedures by which he calculated. In this, however, he was unsuccessful; he could say of his results only that "they seem to rise with the rapidity of lightning" in his mind, but that their actual operations were largely inaccessible to him.

Some savants have astonishing verbal powers—the last thing one might expect in intellectually defective individuals. Thus, there are savants who are able, by the age of two, to read books and newspapers with the utmost facility but without the least comprehension. (Their expertise, their decoding, is wholly phonological and syntactic, without any sense of meaning.)

Almost all savants have prodigious powers of memory. Dr. J. Langdon Down, one of the greatest observers in this realm, who coined the term "idiot savant" in 1887, remarked that "extraordinary memory was often associated with very great defect of reasoning power." He describes giving one of his patients Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." The patient read the entire book, and in a single reading imprinted it in memory. But he had skipped a line on one page, an error at once detected and corrected. "Ever after," Down tells us, "when reciting from memory the stately periods of Gibbon, he would, on coming to the third page, skip the line and go back and correct the error with as much regularity as if it had been part of the regular text." Martin A., a savant I wrote about in "A Walking Grove," could recall the entire nine volumes of the 1954 Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. This had been read to him by his father, and the text would be "replayed" in his father's voice.

While early medical observers sometimes conceived of savant skills as the overdevelopment of a single mental faculty, few of them felt that savant talents were of much more than anecdotal interest. But in the nineteen-forties, when autism was first delineated, it became evident that the majority of "idiot savants" were in fact autistic, and that the incidence of savantism in the autistic was almost two hundred times its incidence in the retarded population, and thousands of times that in the population at large. Furthermore, it became clear that many autistic savants had multiple talents—musical, mnemonic, visual-graphic, computational, etc.

In 1977, the psychologist Lorna Selfe published "Nadia: A Case of Extraordinary Drawing Ability in an Autistic Child." Nadia suddenly started drawing at the age of three and a half, rendering horses and, later, a variety of other subjects in a way that psychologists considered "not possible." Her drawings, they felt, were qualitatively different from those of other children: she had a sense of space, an ability to depict appearances and shadows, a sense of perspective, such as the most gifted normal child might develop only at three times her age. She experimented constantly with different angles and perspectives. Whereas normal children go through a developmental sequence from random scribbling to schematic and geometric figures to "tadpole" figures, Nadia seemed to bypass these and to move at once into highly recognizable, detailed representational drawings. The development of drawing in children, it was felt at the time, paralleled the development of conceptual powers and language skills; but Nadia, it seemed, just drew what she saw, without the usual need to "understand" or "interpret" it. She not only showed enormous graphic gifts, an unprecedented precocity, but drew in a way that attested to a wholly different mode of perception and mind.

The case of Nadia aroused great excitement in the neurological and psychological communities, and suddenly focussed a belated attention on savant talents, and on the nature of talents and special abilities in general. Where, for a century or more, neurologists had confined their attention to failures and breakdowns of neural function, there was now a move in the other direction—toward exploring the structure of heightened powers, of talents, and their biological basis in the brain. Here "idiot savants" provided unique opportunities, for they seemed to exhibit a large range of inborn talents: raw, pure expressions of the biological—much less dependent upon or influenced by environmental and cultural factors than the talents of "normal" people.

In June of 1987, I received a large packet from a publisher in England. It was full of drawings—drawings that delighted me greatly, because they portrayed many of the landmarks I had grown up with in London: monumental buildings like St. Paul's, St. Pancras Station, the Albert Hall, the Natural History Museum; and others, odd, sometimes out-of-the-way, but dear and familiar places, like the Pagoda in Kew Gardens. They were very accurate, but not in the least mechanical—on the contrary, they were full of energy, spontaneity, oddity, life.

In the packet, I discovered a letter from the publisher: The artist, Stephen Wiltshire, was autistic, and had shown savant abilities from an early age. His "London Alphabet," a sequence of twenty-six drawings, had been done when he was ten; an amazing elevator shaft, with a vertiginous perspective, when he was eight. One drawing was an imagined scene—of St. Paul's surrounded by flames in the Great Fire of London. Stephen was not merely a savant but a prodigy. Sixty of his drawings, a mere fraction of what he had done, were to be published, the letter informed me; the author was not yet thirteen.

Stephen's drawings reminded me, in many ways, of drawings by my patient José—"The Autist Artist" whom I had known and written about, years before—who had an extraordinary eye and

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gift for drawing. Though José and Stephen came from such different backgrounds, the similarity of their drawings was so uncanny as to make me wonder whether there might not be a distinctive "autistic" form of perception and art. But José, despite his fine gifts (not, perhaps, as great as Stephen's, but quite remarkable nonetheless), was wasting away in a state psychiatric hospital; Stephen had somehow been luckier.

A few weeks later, visiting family and friends in England, I mentioned Stephen and his drawings to my brother, David, a general practitioner in northwest London. "Stephen Wiltshire!" he exclaimed, very startled. "He's a patient of mine—I've known Stephen since he was three."

David told me something of Stephen's background. He was born in London in April of 1974, the second child of a West Indian transit worker and his wife. Unlike his sister, Annette, born two years earlier, Stephen showed some delay in the motor landmarks of infant life—sitting, standing, hand control, walking—and a resistance to being held. In his second and third years, more problems appeared. He would not play with other children, and tended to scream, or hide in a corner, if they approached. He would not make eye contact with his parents or anyone else. Sometimes he seemed deaf to people's voices, though his hearing was normal (and thunder terrified him). Perhaps most disquieting, he did not use language; he was virtually mute.

Just before Stephen's third birthday, his father was killed in a motorcycle accident. Stephen had been strongly attached to him, and after his death grew much more disturbed. He started screaming, rocking, and flapping his hands, and lost what little language he had. At this point, the diagnosis of infantile autism had been made, and arrangements for him to attend Queensmill, a special school for developmentally disabled children. Lorraine Cole, the headmistress at Queensmill, observed that Stephen was very remote when he started school, at the age of four. He seemed unaware of other people, and showed no interest in his surroundings. He would simply wander about aimlessly, or occasionally run out of the room. As Cole writes:

> He had virtually no understanding of or interest in the use of language. Other people held no apparent meaning for him except to fulfil some immediate, unspoken need; he used them as objects. He could not tolerate frustration, nor changes in routine or environment and he responded to any of these with desperate, angry roaring. He had no idea of play, no normal sense of danger and little motivation to undertake any activity except scribbling.

She later wrote to me, "Stephen would climb onto a play-bike, pedal it furiously, then hurl himself off it, roaring with laughter, and sometimes screaming."

Yet at this point the first evidence of his visual preoccupation, and talent, appeared. He seemed fascinated by shadows, shapes, angles, and by the age of five he was fascinated by pictures, too. He would make "sudden dashes to other rooms where he would stare intently at pictures which fascinated him," Cole writes. He would "find paper and pencil and scribble, totally absorbed for long periods."

Stephen's "scribblings" were largely of cars, and occasionally of animals and people. Lorraine Cole speaks of his doing "wickedly clever caricatures" of some of the teachers. But his special interest—his fixation, which developed when he was seven—was the drawing of buildings: buildings in London he had seen on school trips, or on television or in magazines. Why he developed this sudden, special interest and preoccupation, so powerful and exclusive that he now had no impulse to draw anything else, is not wholly clear, though fixations are exceedingly common in autistic people. Jessy Park, an autistic artist, is obsessed with weather anomalies and constellations in the night sky; Shyoichiro Yamamura, an autistic artist in Japan, drew insects almost exclusively; and Jonny, an autistic boy described by the pioneer psychologist Mira Rothenberg, for a period drew only electric lamps. Stephen, from this early age, had been almost exclusively preoccupied with buildings—buildings, by preference, of great complexity and size—and with aerial views and extremities of perspective. He had one other interest at the age of seven: he was fascinated by sudden calamities—and, above all, by earthquakes. Whenever Stephen drew these, or saw them on television or in magazines, he grew strangely excited and overwrought; nothing else disturbed him in quite this way. One wonders whether his earthquake obsession (like the apoca-

"Do you ever catch yourself wondering what the hell's gone wrong with this corporation?"

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lyptic fantasies of some psychotics) represented a sense of his own inner instability, which in drawing he could try to master.

When Chris Marris, a young teacher, came to Queensmill in 1982, he was astonished by Stephen's drawings. Marris had been teaching disabled children for nine years, but nothing he had ever seen had prepared him for Stephen. "I was amazed by this little boy, who sat on his own in a corner of the room, drawing," he told me. "Stephen used to draw and draw and draw and draw—the school called him 'the drawer.' And they were the most unchildlike drawings—like St. Paul's and Tower Bridge and other London landmarks, in tremendous detail, when other children his age were just drawing stick figures. It was the sophistication of his drawings, their mastery of line and perspective, that amazed me—and these were all there when he was seven."

Stephen was one of a group of six in Chris's class. "He knew the names of all the others," Chris told me, "but there was no sense of interaction or friendship with them. He was such an isolated little chap." But his native gift was so great, Chris felt, that he did not need to be "taught," in the ordinary way. He had apparently worked out by himself, or had an innate grasp of, drawing techniques and perspective. Along with this, he showed a prodigious visual memory, able to take in the most complex buildings, or cityscapes, in a few seconds, and to hold them in mind, in the minutest detail—indefinitely, it seemed, and without the least apparent effort. Nor did the details need to be coherent, to be integrated into a conventional structure; among the most startling early drawings, Chris felt, were ones of demolition sites, and earthquake scenes, with girders lying everywhere, exploded in all directions, everything in complete, almost random disarray. Yet Stephen remembered these scenes and drew them with the same fidelity and ease with which he drew classical models. It seemed to make no difference whether he drew from life or from the images in his memory. He needed no aide-mémoire, no sketches or notes—a single sidelong glance, lasting only a few seconds, was enough.

Stephen also showed abilities in spheres besides the visual. He was very good at mime, even before he was able to speak. He had an excellent memory for songs and would reproduce these with great accuracy. He could copy any movement to perfection. Thus Stephen, at eight, showed an ability to grasp, retain, and reproduce the most complex visual, auditory, motor, and verbal patterns, apparently irrespective of their context, significance, or meaning.

It is characteristic of the savant memory (in whatever sphere—visual, musical, lexical) that it is prodigiously retentive of particulars. The large and the small, the trivial and the momentous, may be indifferently mixed, without any sense of salience, of foreground versus background. There is little disposition to generalize from these particulars or to integrate them with each other, causally or historically, or with the self. In such a memory, there tends to be an immovable connection of scene and time, of content and context (a so-called concrete-situational, or episodic, memory)—hence the astounding powers of literal recall so common in autistic savants, along with difficulty in extracting the salient features from these particular memories in order to build a general sense and memory. Thus, the savant twins, calendrical calculators whom I described in "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat," while able to itemize every event of their lives from about their fourth year on, had no sense of their lives, of historical change, as a whole. Such a memory structure is profoundly different from the normal and has both extraordinary strengths and extraordinary weaknesses. Jane Taylor McDonnell, author of an excellent 1993 book, "News from the Border: A Mother's Memoir of Her Autistic Son," says of her son, "Paul doesn't generalize the particulars of his experience into the habitual, the ongoing, as many (most) other people do. Each moment seems to stand out distinctly, and almost unconnected with others, in his mind. So nothing seems to get lost, repressed, in the process." So it was, I often thought, with Stephen, whose life experience *seemed to consist of vivid, isolated moments*, unconnected with each other or with him, and so devoid of any deeper continuity or development.

Though Stephen drew incessantly, he did not seem to take any interest in the finished drawings, and Chris might find them in the wastebasket or just left on a desk. Stephen did not even seem to concentrate on his subject while he was drawing. "Once," Chris related to me, "Stephen was sitting opposite the Albert Memorial: he was doing a fabulous picture of that, but at the same time looking all around—at buses, the Albert Hall, whatever."

Though he did not think that Stephen needed to be "taught," Chris devoted himself as much as possible to

"We don't have java. We have mocha java."

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Stephen and his drawing, providing him with models, with encouragement. This was not always easy, because Stephen did not show much personal feeling. "In a way, he was responsive to us, the adults," Chris told me. "He would say, 'Hullo, Chris,' or 'Hullo, Jean.' But it was difficult to reach him, to know what was in his mind." He seemed not to understand different emotions and would laugh if one of the children had a temper tantrum or screamed. (Stephen himself rarely had tantrums at school, but when he was younger he sometimes had them at home.)

Chris was central in Stephen's life between 1982 and 1986. He would often take Stephen, along with his class, on outings in London, to see St. Paul's, to feed the pigeons in Trafalgar Square, to see Tower Bridge being raised and lowered. These outings finally incited Stephen to words, in his ninth year. Travelling in the school bus, he would recognize all the buildings and places they passed, and would excitedly call out their names. (When he was six he had learned to ask for "paper" when he needed it—for many years, he had not understood how to ask for anything, even by gesture or pointing. This, therefore, was not only one of his first words, but the first time he understood how to use words to address others—the social use of language, something normally achieved by the second year of life.)

There were some fears that if Stephen began to acquire language he might lose his astounding visual gifts. But both Chris and Lorraine Cole felt that they had to do their utmost to enrich Stephen's life, to bring him out of his wordless isolation into a world of interaction and language. They concentrated on making language more interesting, more relevant, to Stephen, by linking it with the buildings and places he loved, and getting him to draw a whole series of buildings based on letters of the alphabet ("A" for Albert Hall, "B" for Buckingham Palace, and so on).

Chris wondered if others would find Stephen's drawings as extraordinary as he did. In 1985, he entered two of them in the National Exhibition of Children's Art; both were exhibited, and one of them won a prize. Around this time, Chris also got an expert opinion on Stephen's abilities from Beate Hermelin and Neil O'Connor, psychologists who were well known for their work on autistic savants. They found Stephen one of the most gifted savants they had ever tested, immensely proficient in both visual recognition and drawing from memory. On the other hand, he did rather poorly in general intelligence tests, scoring a verbal I.Q. of only 52.

Word of Stephen's talents started to spread, and arrangements were made to film him as part of a BBC program on savants, titled "The Foolish Wise Ones." Stephen took the filming very calmly, not at all fazed by cameras and crews—possibly even enjoying it slightly. He was asked to draw St. Pancras Station—"a very 'Stephen' building," Lorraine Cole emphasized, "elaborate, detailed, and incredibly complicated." The accuracy of his drawing is attested to by a photograph taken at the same time. (There is, however, a curious error: Stephen makes a mirror reversal of the clock and the whole top of the building.) His accuracy was astounding, as were the speed with which he drew, the economy of line, the charm and style of his drawings—it was these that won viewers' hearts. The BBC program was shown in February of 1987 and aroused a storm of interest—letters poured in, asking where Stephen's drawings could be seen, and publishers offered contracts. Very soon, a collection of his work, to be called simply "Drawings," was slated for publication; and it was proofs of this that I received in June of 1987.

Stephen, only thirteen, was now famous throughout England—but as autistic, as disabled, as ever. He could draw, with the greatest ease, any street he had seen; but he could not, unaided, cross one by himself. He could see all London in his mind's eye, but its human aspects were unintelligible to him. He could not maintain a real conversation with anyone, though, increasingly, he now showed a sort of pseudosocial conduct, talking to strangers in an indiscriminate and bizarre way.

Chris had been away for some months in Australia and returned to find his young pupil famous—but, he thought, completely unchanged. "He recognized that he'd been on TV, and that he'd had a book published, but he didn't go overboard, as many children would have done. He wasn't affected; he was still the Stephen I knew." Stephen had not seemed to miss Chris too much during his absence, but seemed glad to see him back, said "Hullo, Chris!" with a big smile on his face.

None of this quite added up for me. Here was Stephen being exhibited as a significant artist—the former president of the Royal Academy of Arts, Sir Hugh Casson, had called him "possibly the best child artist in Britain"—but Chris and others, even the most sympathetic, seemed to see him as greatly lacking in both intellect and identity. The tests that had been given to him seemed to confirm the severity of his emotional and intellectual defect. Was there, none-

SONNET

A man talking to his ex-wife on the phone.
He has loved her voice and listens with attention
to every modulation of its tone. Knowing
it intimately. Not knowing what he wants
from the sound of it, from the tendered civility.
He studies, out the window, the seed shapes
of the broken pods of infertile ornamental trees.
The kind that grow in everyone's garden, that no one
but horticulturists can name. Four arched chambers
of pale-green, tiny vegetal proscenium arches,
a pair of black tapering seeds bedded in each chamber.
A wish geometry, miniature, Indian or Persian,
lovers or gods in their apartments. Outside, white,
patient animals, and tangled vines, and rain.

—Robert Hass

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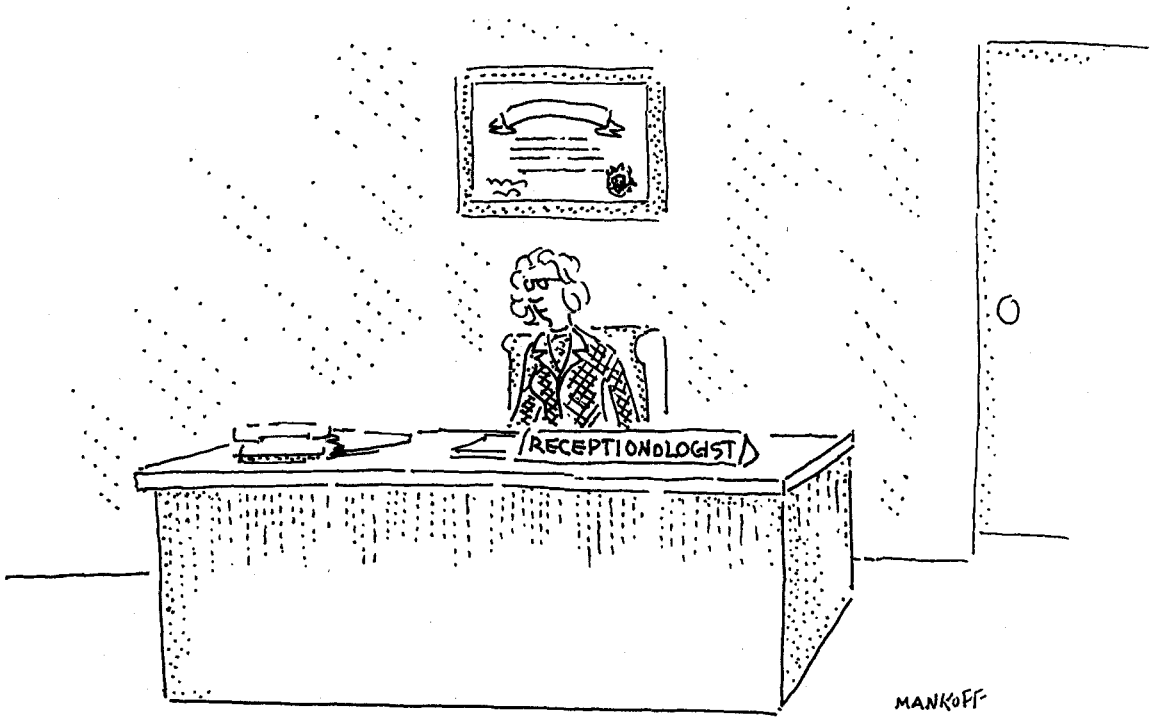

theless, a mental and personal dimension, a depth and sensibility, in him which could emerge (if nowhere else) in his art? Was not art, quintessentially, an expression of a personal vision, a self? Could one be an artist without having a "self"? All these questions had been in my mind since I had first seen Stephen's pictures, and I was eager to meet him.

THE opportunity arrived in February of 1988, when Stephen came to New York, accompanied by Chris, to make another television documentary. Stephen had been in New York for a couple of days, seeing and drawing the sights of the city, and—his greatest thrill—flying over it in a helicopter. I thought he might like to see City Island, the little island off the Bronx where I live, and invited him to come to my house. He and Chris arrived in the middle of a snowstorm. Stephen was a demure, grave little black boy, though he clearly had an impish side. He looked young to me—closer to ten than thirteen—with a smallish head, tilted to one side. He reminded me somewhat of the autistic children I had seen before, with a head-nodding mannerism or tic, and some odd flapping movements of the hands. He never looked at me directly but seemed to glance at me, briefly, out of the corners of his eyes.

I asked him how he was finding New York, and he said, "Very nice," with a strong Cockney accent. I have little recollection of his saying much else; he tended to be very quiet, almost mute. But his language had developed a good deal since the early days, and there were times, Chris said, when he would get excited and almost babble. He had been very excited on the plane—he had never flown before—and, Chris told me, "talked with the cabin crew and other passengers, showing his book around on the flight." When Stephen was invited to sit in the jump seat for the New York landing, Chris recalled a prescient dream that Stephen had reported before they left London. "I am being the pilot of the jumbo jet," Stephen had said. "And I can see the skyscrapers and the Manhattan skyline."

Stephen wanted to show me his latest drawings, of New York—they were all in a portfolio Chris was carrying—and I admired them (especially the aerial ones he had done from the helicopter) as he showed them to me. He nodded emphatically as he displayed them, calling some of them "good" and "nice." He seemed to have no sense of either vanity or modesty but showed me his drawings, commented on them, in an ingenuous way, and with a total absence of self-consciousness.

After he showed me these, I asked him if he would draw something for me, perhaps my house. He nodded, and we wandered outside. It was snowing, cold and wet, not a day to linger. Stephen bestowed a quick, indifferent look on my house—there seemed to be hardly any act of attention—glanced at the rest of the road and the sea at the end of the road, then asked to come in. As he took up his pen and started drawing, I held my breath. "Don't worry," Chris broke in. "You can talk at the top of your voice if you want to. It won't make any difference—you can't interrupt him. He could concentrate if the house were falling down." Stephen did not make any sketch or outline, but just started at one edge of the paper (I had a feeling he might have started anywhere at all) and moved steadily across it, as if transcribing some tenacious inner image or visualization. As he was putting in the porch railings, Chris remarked, "I didn't see any of that detail there."

"No," Stephen said, his expression implying "No, you wouldn't."

Stephen had not studied the house, had made no sketches, had not drawn it from life, but had, in a brief glance, taken everything in, extracted its essence, seen every detail, held it all in his memory, and then, in a single, swift line, drawn it. And I did not doubt that, had we let him, he could have drawn the entire street.

Stephen's drawing was accurate in some ways but took various liberties in others: he gave my house a chimney where there was none, but omitted the three fir trees in front of the house, the picket fence around it, and the neighboring houses. He focussed on the house to the exclusion of anything else. It has often been said that savants have photographic or eidetic memories, but as I photocopied Stephen's drawing I

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thought how unlike a Xerox machine he was. His pictures in no sense resembled copies or photographs, something mechanical and impersonal; there were always additions, subtractions, revisions, and, of course, Stephen's unmistakable style. They were images and showed us some of the immensely complex neural processes that are needed to make a visual and graphic image. Stephen's drawings were individual constructions, but could they be seen, in a deeper sense, as creations?

His drawings (like those of my patient José) had a closeness to the actual, a literalness and naïveté. Clara Park, the mother of an autistic artist, has called this an "unusual capacity to render the object as perceived" (not *con*ceived). She also writes of an "unusual capacity for delayed rendition" as characteristic of savant artists; this, indeed, was very striking in Stephen.

Sir Hugh Casson wrote in his introduction to "Drawings":

> Unlike most children, who tend to draw less from direct observation than from symbols or images seen secondhand, Stephen Wiltshire draws exactly what he sees—no more, no less.

Artists are full of symbols and images seen second hand and bring to their drawings not only the conventions of representation they acquired as children but the entire history of Western art. It may be necessary to leave these behind, to leave behind even the primal category of "objecthood." As Monet put it:

> Whenever you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have in front of you—a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. . . . Merely think, here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives your own naïve impression of the scene before you.

But Stephen (if Casson is right) and José, and Nadia and other savants, may not make such "deconstructions," may not have to relinquish such constructs, because (at many levels, from the neural to the cultural) they never made them in the first place, or made them to a far smaller extent. In this way, their situation is radically different from that of the "normal"—though this does not mean that they cannot be artists, too.

I started to wonder, too, about the relationships in Stephen's life—how important they were, to what extent they had developed in the face of his autism (and devastating early loss). His relationship with Chris Marris, perhaps the most crucial during his last five years at Queensmill, had threatened to end when, in July of 1987, Stephen had to leave Queensmill for a secondary school. For a while, Chris had arranged to continue seeing Stephen on weekends, to take him on drawing outings around London, and even on his first trips to New York and Paris. But by May, 1989, these expeditions had come to an end, and Stephen seemed to lack the initiative to do much drawing on his own. It seemed as if he needed another person to get him going, to "facilitate" his drawing. Whether he missed, or mourned, Chris in a more personal way was far less clear. When I later spoke of Chris to Stephen, he would talk about him—always as "Chris Marris" or "Mr. Marris"—in a very flat and factual way, without any apparent emotion. A normal child would be deeply distressed at the loss of someone who had been so close for many years, but no such distress was apparent in Stephen. I wondered if he was repressing painful feelings, or distancing himself from them, but I was not sure whether, in his autistic way, he had any personal emotion here at all. Christopher Gillberg writes of a fifteen-year-old autistic boy whose mother had died of cancer. Asked how he was doing, the boy replied, "Oh, I am all right. You see I have Asperger syndrome which makes me less vulnerable to the loss of loved ones than are most people." Stephen, of course, would never have been able to articulate his inner state in this way, and yet one had to wonder whether he took the loss of Chris with some of the same flatness as Gillberg's young patient, and whether such a flatness might not characterize most of the human relationships in his life.

INTO this void irrupted Margaret Hewson. Margaret had been Stephen's literary agent since the BBC program two years before and had developed an increasing personal and artistic interest in him. I had first met her in 1988, when, with Stephen, we roved around London on a drawing expedition. Margaret and Stephen, it was evident to me, got on very well. Stephen, though perhaps incapable at this point of any depth of feeling or caring, never-

"It's probably just somebody I slept with in the seventies."

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theless showed strong instinctive responses to different people. He had taken to Margaret from the start—attracted, I think, by her enormous energy and impetus, the exhilarating, whirlwind atmosphere she seemed to create all around her; and by her obvious feeling for him and his art. Margaret seemed to know everyone and to have been everywhere, and perhaps this gave Stephen a sense of a larger world, of horizons far beyond the narrow ones that had confined his life hitherto. Margaret, finally, was very knowledgeable about art, a knowledge that extended from art history to the technical details of drawing.

In the fall of 1989, Margaret began obtaining drawing commissions for Stephen, and taking him out drawing every weekend, along with her husband and partner in the literary agency, Andrew. She instantly abolished the use of tracing paper and rulers (such as he had used for some of the drawings in his second book, "Cities," published in 1989), and insisted he draw freehand in ink. "One can learn the value of a line only by going straight into ink and making mistakes," she declared. Under Margaret's impetus and guidance, Stephen started to draw regularly once again, and to draw more boldly than he had ever done. (And yet even in "Cities" there had been some extraordinary freehand improvisations—imaginary cities, which Stephen had conceived, conflating the features of several real ones.)

After a morning of travelling and drawing, they would all return to the Hewson house for lunch, where they would often be joined by the Hewsons' daughter, Annie, only a few years older than Stephen. He seemed to look forward to these outings and would become excited on Sunday mornings, waiting for Margaret and Andrew to collect him. For their part, the Hewsons felt a real affection for Stephen, even though they were not sure he felt any actual affection for them. They started taking him on occasional longer excursions—a trip to Salisbury, and two weekends in Scotland.

Stephen's obvious fondness for the visual effects of water—he lived near a canal in London and would sometimes walk along it with his mother or sister, and do little sketches of the boats and locks—suggested to Margaret a theme for a new book. Together, they would visit cities built around canals, "floating cities"—Venice, Amsterdam, and Leningrad—and draw these.

Late in the fall of 1989, Margaret impulsively phoned Mrs. Wiltshire and suggested that Stephen and his sister, Annette, come to Venice with them for their Christmas holiday. The trip went exceedingly well. Stephen, now fifteen, seemed to cope easily with the uncertainties of travel, which would have thrown him only a few years before. He portrayed, as Margaret had hoped he might, St. Mark's, the Doges' Palace, the great monuments of Venetian culture, and obviously enjoyed drawing them. But when asked what he thought of Venice, after a week in this high point of European civilization, he could only say, "I prefer Chicago" (and this not because of its buildings but its cars—Stephen had a passion for American cars and could identify, name, and draw every postwar model).

A few weeks later, plans were made for his next trip, to Amsterdam. Stephen approved of the trip for a very specific reason: he had seen photographs of the city, and said, "I prefer Amsterdam to Venice, because it has *cars*." Once again, Stephen captured perfectly the feeling of the city, from his formal drawings of the Westerkerk and the Begijnhof to his tiny, charming sketch of an odd statue with a street organ. Stephen seemed very much alive, and in high humor, in Amsterdam and started to show new aspects of himself. Lorraine Cole, who came along on the trip, was particularly startled at the changes she saw:

> When he was little, nothing was amusing to Stephen. He now finds all manner of things funny and his laughter is incredibly infectious. He has gone back to caricaturing people around him, and he takes great pleasure watching his victims' reactions.

One evening in Amsterdam, when Stephen was due to give an interview for a television show, Margaret developed a severe attack of asthma and had to stay in her hotel room. Stephen was very distressed, refused to do the TV show, and could not be budged from the end of Margaret's bed. "I'm going to stay with you till you get better," he declared. "You're not going to die."

Margaret and Andrew were very

SHOWCASE

THE BOXER

THE World Boxing Organization lightweight champion, Oscar De La Hoya, a twenty-one-year-old third-generation boxer from the East Los Angeles barrio, begins training this week for his toughest test yet: on February 18th, he will face John John Molina, the International Boxing Federation junior lightweight champion, at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Golden Boy, as he has been known since winning America's only gold medal in boxing at the 1992 Olympics, has in the past had problems with his managers, and has been accused of being hyped more than he has been trained. But, after a bitter divorce from his managers in December of 1993, and a four-month absence from the ring, De La Hoya has followed an ambitious schedule, most recently defeating Carl Griffith and Johnny Avila in quick succession in November and December, bringing his record to 16–0, with fifteen knockouts. Before defending his title against Griffith in Las Vegas, De La Hoya joked that he would walk home to Los Angeles if Griffith landed a punch. He just about lived up to his boxing bravado when he sent his opponent to the canvas in the first round, and then knocked him out sixty-two seconds into the third round. Observers have since noticed, in addition to a rediscovered work ethic, a measure of modesty not previously seen in the prizefighter. "I'm having fun," De La Hoya says. "It's a different outlook. Bad things boxers are doing are in the news every day. I fight hard in the ring, and in the interview after the fight I present myself in a good way—as humble as I can be." With Sugar Ray Leonard—to whom he has often been compared—in retirement, Julio Cesar Chavez on his way out, and George Foreman somewhere in between, the clean-cut champion may be just what the tarnished fight game needs.

—HOWARD J. LALLI

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

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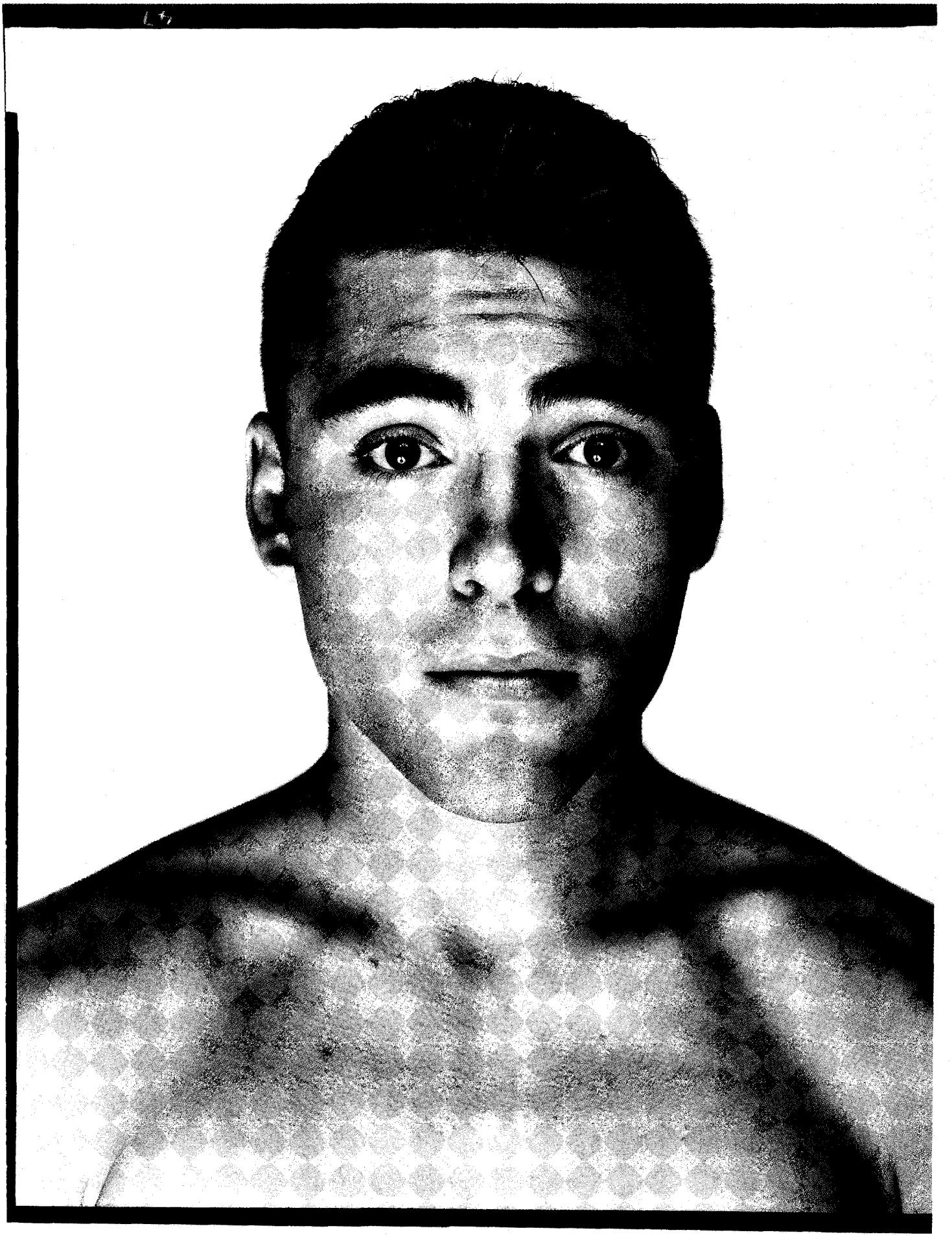

Oscar De La Hoya, Phoenix, October 30, 1993.

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touched by this. "This was the first time we saw that he cared," she told me.

WAS it possible that Stephen was starting to show some belated personal development, in spite of his autism? Intrigued by Margaret's report on the Amsterdam trip, I arranged to come along on the next visit—to Moscow and Leningrad, planned for May of 1990. I flew to London, met Stephen and Margaret there, and did some testing with Stephen. These tests, devised by the cognitive psychologist Uta Frith and her colleagues, Simon Baron-Cohen and Alan M. Leslie, require one to react to various cartoons, some of which relate simple sequences of events, while others cannot be understood without attributing different intentions, perspectives, beliefs, or states of mind (and sometimes dissemblings) to the characters involved. Stephen, it was clear, had a very limited ability to imagine others' states of mind. (Frith writes that one researcher "carried out an informal survey in America using cartoons from *The New Yorker*. Very able and highly educated autistic people failed to understand them, or find them funny.")

I also gave him a large jigsaw puzzle, which he put together very swiftly. I then gave him a second puzzle, this time *face down*, so that he did not have the picture to assist him. He did this one just as quickly as the first. The picture—the meaning, that is—was not necessary to him, it seemed; what was preëminent, and spectacular, was his ability to apprehend a large number of abstract shapes and to see in a trice how they fitted together.

Such performances are characteristic of autistic people, who also excel in tests of block design and, especially, in finding embedded figures. Thus, the psychologist Lynn Waterhouse, testing one visual savant, J.D. (who as a boy, his parents said, was able to complete a five-hundred-piece jigsaw puzzle in about two minutes, and thereafter had to be given five-thousand-piece puzzles), found he performed "phenomenally well" on almost every visual-perception test she could give him: on tests of line orientation, visual-gestalt closure, block design, and so on, he obtained nearly perfect results, in each case performing the tests at many times the normal rate. Stephen, like J.D., had prodigious powers of abstract-pattern recognition and visual analysis. But this alone could not explain his drawing; J.D., despite his perceptual powers, was not especially gifted in drawing.

Stephen, then, was calling on another sort of power, of vivid representation—representation that created an external form for his perceptions, and that bore a very recognizable and personal style. Whether this power of representation entailed any depth of inner resonance or response remained completely unclear.

Given Stephen's powers of abstract visual analysis, how important was "meaning" to him? How much did he get the meaning of what he drew? And how much did it matter whether he got it or not? I showed Stephen a portrait by Matisse and asked if he would draw it. (Margaret and Andrew are very fond of Matisse, and it was a print of theirs that I showed Stephen.) He drew it swiftly and confidently; it was not wholly, literally accurate, but it was very Matisse-like. When I asked him to draw it again, from memory, an hour later, he drew it differently, and, an hour after this, yet differently again; but all his drawings (he did five), while different in detail, were strikingly evocative of the original. In some sense, therefore, Stephen had extracted the drawing's "Matisseness," had permuted it in various ways, and had made it central in all his copies. Was this purely formal, cognitive—a matter of getting Matisse's "style" in a formulaic way—or was he responding, at a deeper level, to Matisse's vision, his sensibility and art?

I asked Stephen if he remembered my house, which he had visited more than two years before, and if he would draw it again for me. He nodded and again drew the house, but with various revisions. He now gave it one lower window instead of two; he removed a pillar from the porch and made the steps more prominent. He kept the (fictitious) chimney, and now he added a fictitious American flag on a tall flagstaff as well; I think he felt these to be the ingredients of a formulary "American" house. Thus, the Matisse and my house were conceived, and represented, in a variety of versions. In both cases, he got the style at once, and his later drawings were improvisations within this style.

After all this testing, I was still bewildered. Stephen seemed so defective and so gifted, simultaneously. Were his defects and his gifts totally separate, or were they, at a deeper level, integrally related? Were these qualities, like autistic literalness and concreteness, that might in some contexts be gifts, in others deficits? The tests also gave me a feeling of disquiet, as if I had spent days reducing Stephen to defects and gifts and not seeing him as a human being as a whole. I had just reread Uta Frith's book "Autism: Explaining the Enigma" and wrote to her, "Tomorrow I go with Stephen to Russia. . . . I have seen something of his odd skills and defects—I have yet to see him as a mind and person. Perhaps a week of being with him will show me this."

WITH these hopes, then, I set out with Stephen for Russia. Sitting at Gatwick Airport, waiting for our flight, I was impressed by his deep concentration. He sat enthralled with the magazine *Classic Cars*. He looked at the pictures with extraordinary intentness; he did not raise his head from the magazine for more than twenty minutes. Occasionally, he bent closer to inspect a detail; what he saw, I thought, would be forever imprinted on his cortex. Once in a while, he suddenly laughed. What, in this abstract exercise, excited his amusement?

In flight, Stephen immersed himself in a drawing of Balmoral, after studying a postcard of the castle. He was oblivious of the conversations going on around him, the magnificent landscapes and seascapes below.

At the Moscow airport, Stephen, very quiet, looked at the cars—yellow cabs and black Zils with license plates starting with "MK." A hideous smell of unrefined gas hung over the airport. Stephen sniffed, and wrinkled his nose; he is extremely sensitive to smells. As we drove into the city, at 2 A.M., we saw tall, silvery birches by the side of the road, and an immense, low moon. Even

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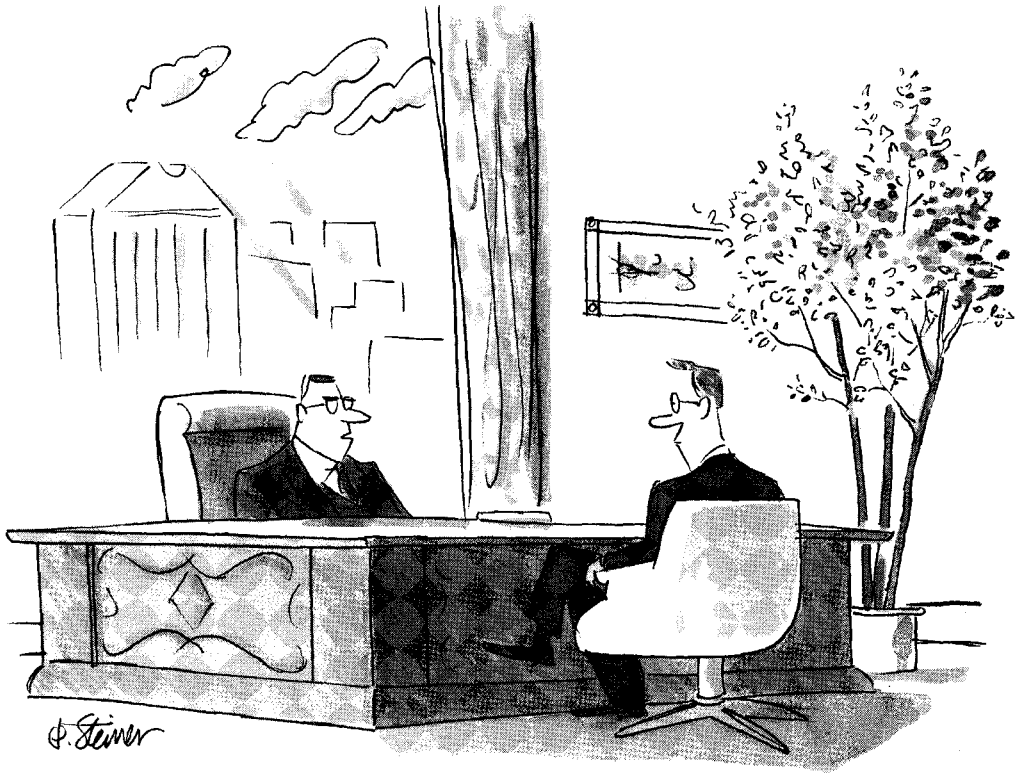
Stephen gazed at the vast moonlit landscape with delight, his nose pressed against the cold window of the bus.

The next morning, as we walked around Red Square, Stephen was actively curious, taking snapshots, peering at buildings, struck by their novelty. Other people on the street turned around and stared at him; black people, apparently, were unusual in Moscow. He found a spot from which he wanted to draw the Spassky Tower, and had Margaret set his stool in precisely that place. Not there, or there, but *here:* passive in so many ways, he was entirely master now. In the middle of Red Square, he was a tiny figure, wearing a fur cap and navy-blue woollen gloves. Dozens of tourists swarmed around in the brilliant May sun; many of them peered at Stephen's drawing. Stephen ignored them, or perhaps was unconscious of them, and drew on undisturbed. He hummed to himself as he drew, holding his pen, characteristically, awkwardly, childishly, between his third and fourth fingers. At one point, he broke into giggles and laughter—but this, it turned out, was because a scene from "Rain Man" kept entering his mind ("Don't you dare drive!" he said). Margaret sat to one side as he drew, encouraging him—"Good! Clever boy!"—advising him on aesthetic points and architectural details. At her suggestion, for instance, Stephen examined the tower's crenellation. She is almost a collaborator, in a way, and, though his talent is so personal and indigenous, he clearly looks to her for affectionate and always affirmative comments.

Later, we visited the History Museum, an eclectic red brick building, designed by an English architect. Margaret instructed Stephen, "Have a jolly good look at that building. Study it. Take in the vocabulary of that building now—I want you to draw it from memory afterward." But what Stephen actually drew later was different from the History Museum: it bore half a dozen onion domes, not present in the original.



"I had to put on thirty pounds for this role."

• •

I first wondered whether this was a defect of memory and asked him if he would draw St. Basil's from memory. He did a very accurate and quite charming sketch, in all of two minutes. Later in the day, he started a drawing of the vast shopping arcade at GUM, which he finished at leisure over a Coke in the hotel. He had in his memory even the shop signs, which were to him unintelligible Cyrillic letters. There was no faulting his memory, clearly.

Margaret and I tried to think what had happened with the History Museum; Stephen was distracted when asked to memorize it (the militia in Red Square made him nervous) and when asked how he felt about it he would say only, "It's all right" (which meant he did not like it). He tried to make it more attractive, I think, by crowning it with onion domes, but these were so out of keeping with the base that the resulting building looked hardly possible.

The next morning, as we met for breakfast in the hotel dining room, Stephen greeted me with a booming "Hullo, Oliver!"—shouted with great friendliness and warmth, or so I thought. But then I was not sure. Was it merely a social automatism? The neurologist Kurt Goldstein wrote of another autistic boy:

> He becomes fond of some people. . . . At the same time, however, his emotional responses and human attachments remain shallow and perfunctory. Meeting him at intervals of several months, one is welcomed, and bid goodbye, with the same impersonal kindness as if contact were only real as long as it lasted during concrete presence . . . it is a presence without emotional content.

At an Intourist shop, I bought a piece of amber. Stephen glanced at it indifferently—it held no visual appeal for him—until I rubbed it and showed him how it became electrically charged. It attracted tiny pieces of paper now: when I put the amber a few inches away, they suddenly flew up to it. His eyes opened wide in astonishment; he took the amber from me and repeated the electrification by himself. But then his wonder seemed to fade. He did not ask what had happened or why, and he appeared uninterested when I explained it. I was excited at seeing his initial astonishment—I had never seen him truly astonished before—but then it faded, died out. And to me, this seemed rather ominous.

At dinner, chortling, Stephen drew a

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WINTER EVENING

These hunches I get, cold shivers
At the way the light
Makes bloodstains on the house wall,
I'm scared to trust a sparrow.
I won't come near the cat.

Destiny marks you early in the day
With a knowing finger,
Then busies itself setting up the props,
Painting the scenery.

My love's window was on fire
With the sunset.
Her hair was red.
The pillow she carried in her arms
Was like a baby.

I stood and watched,
Quiet as a bread crumb on a windowsill.
All around the birds had fallen silent.
And then the clouds moved
Their tragic robes,
And then the long night.

—CHARLES SIMIC

cartoon of us all at the table, with himself fanning me. (I am sensitive to heat and always carry a Japanese fan, which he had often seen me use.) He portrayed me as cowering under the impact of the fan and himself as large, powerful, in command; this was a symbolic representation, the first one I had seen him make.

Travelling, living with Stephen—we had now been together for five days—I became very conscious of how brittle he was physiologically, of the profound fluctuations in his state. There were times when he was animated and interested in his surroundings and could do brilliant, funny impersonations and cartoons; and there were times when he would revert to the deepest autism and respond, if at all, like an automaton, echolalically. Such fluctuations, usually lasting a few hours, rarely days, are common in children with classical autism, though their cause is not understood. They had been much worse, I was told, when Stephen was younger.

THE next day, we boarded a train for the daylong journey to Leningrad. Margaret had put together a huge hamper of provisions, more than enough for us and any fellow-passengers in the compartment. As the train got under way, we started with an early breakfast—we had left the hotel at five to make this train. As she unpacked the basket, Stephen, half-convulsively, swooped his head and sniffed everything as it came out. I was reminded of some of my post-encephalitic patients, and some people with Tourette's syndrome, in whom I had also seen olfactory behaviors of this sort. I suddenly realized that Stephen's smell-world might be as vivid as his visual one, but that we do not have the language, the means, to convey such a world.

Stephen gazed uncertainly at our hard-boiled eggs. Was it possible that he had never cracked one open? Playfully, I took one and cracked it on my head; Stephen was delighted and burst out laughing. He had never seen a hard-boiled egg cracked in this way, and he gave me a second egg to see if I would do it again, and then, reassured, cracked one on his own head. There was something spontaneous in this egg cracking, and I think Stephen felt easier with me afterward, because I had shown him how playful—how silly—I could be.

After breakfast, Stephen and I played some word games. He was quite good at I Spy, and when I prompted him with "I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'c,'" he quickly reeled off "coat, cat, café, coffee, cool, cup, cigarette." He was very good at filling in letters in incomplete words. And yet, at sixteen, he was still unable, even after repeated demonstrations, to judge the constancy of volume, despite differing heights, in different vessels—a concept that, as Piaget showed, most children grasp at seven.

The train passed through tiny villages of wooden houses and painted churches, giving me the sense of a Tolstoyan world, unchanged in a hundred years. As Stephen watched it all intently, I thought of the thousands of images he must be registering, constructing—all of which he could convey in vivid pictures and vignettes, but none of them, I suspected, synthesized into any general impression in his mind. I had the feeling that the whole visible world flowed through Stephen like a river, without making sense, without being appropriated, without becoming part of him in the least. That though he might, in a sense, retain everything he saw, it was retained as something external, unintegrated, never built on, connected, revised, never influencing or influenced by anything else. I thought of his perception, his memory, as quasi-mechanical—like a vast store, or library, or archive—not even indexed or categorized, or held together by association, yet where anything might be accessed in an instant, as in the random-access memory of a computer. I found myself thinking of him as a sort of train himself, a perceptual missile, travelling through life, noting, recording, but never appropriating, a sort of transmitter of all that rushed past—but himself unchanged, unfed, by the experience.

AS we approached Leningrad, Stephen decided that it was time to draw. "Pencil, Margaret, dahling!" he said. I was amused by the "dahling," a Margaretism that he had adopted, and I could not decide whether it was automatic or conscious, a humorous parody. The train was very jolty, and I was able

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to make only brief notes, but Stephen was perfectly able to draw, with his usual speed and fluency. I had been amazed by this ability earlier, on the airplane. (He looked clumsy, but he picked up some motor skills, it seemed, almost instantly, as some autistic people apparently do. In Amsterdam, he had no hesitation in walking a narrow gangway to a houseboat—something he had never done before—and this reminded me of another autistic youngster I had met, who suddenly walked a tightrope, expertly and fearlessly, the day after seeing it done at the circus.)

In Leningrad, we spent a day of touring and drawing at the Hermitage, and headed back to our hotel for tea. Seeing that Stephen needed some diversion, Margaret said, "*You* be the teacher now—you, Oliver, the pupil."

A glint appeared in Stephen's eye. "What is two take away one?" he asked.

"One," I said promptly.

"Good! Now twenty minus ten?"

I pretended to think for a bit, then said, "Ten."

"That's very good," Stephen said. "Now sixty minus ten?"

I cogitated hard, screwed up my face. "Forty?" I said.

"No," said Stephen. "Wrong. Think!"

I tried to help myself by holding up my fingers in multiples of ten. "I've got it—fifty."

"Right," Stephen said, with an approving smile. "Very good. Now, forty minus twenty."

That was really difficult. I thought for a full minute. "Ten?"

"No," Stephen said. "You must concentrate! But you did pretty well," he added kindly.

The episode was a stunning imitation of an arithmetic lesson such as one might give to a retarded child. Stephen's voice, his gestures, mimicked to perfection those of a well-meaning but condescending teacher—specifically (I felt with some discomfort), mine when I had tested him in London. He had not forgotten this. It was a lesson to me, to all of us, never to underestimate him. Stephen delighted in reversing roles, just as in his cartoon of himself fanning me.

The Russia trip was in some ways delightful, exciting, in others saddening, disappointing, disillusioning. I had hoped to get behind Stephen's autism, to see the person underneath—the mind—but there had been only the merest intimation of this. I had hoped, perhaps sentimentally, for some depth of feeling from him; my heart had leaped at the first "Hullo, Oliver!" but there had been no followup. I wanted to be liked by Stephen, or, at least, seen as a distinct person, but there was something—not unfriendly; rather, de-differentiating—in his attitude, even in his automatic good manners and good humor. I had wanted some interaction; instead, I got a slight sense, perhaps, of how parents of autistic children must feel when they find themselves faced with a virtually unresponsive child. I had still, in some sense, been expecting a relatively normal person, with certain gifts and certain problems. Now I had the sense of a radically different, almost alien mode of mind and being, proceeding in its own way, not to be defined by any of my own norms.

Yet there were times—the egg cracking, the pupil-and-teacher game together—when I felt a current between us, so I still hoped for some sort of relationship with him and made a point of visiting him each time I went to London, generally a few times a year. On one or two occasions, I was able simply to go for a walk with Stephen. I hoped, still, that he might unwind, show me something of his spontaneous, "real" self. But though he would always greet me with his cheery "Hullo, Oliver!" he remained as courteous, as grave, as remote as ever.

There was, however, one enthusiasm we shared—a fondness for car spotting. Stephen especially liked the grand convertibles of the nineteen-fifties and sixties. My favorite cars, by contrast, were the sports cars of my youth—Bristols, Frazer-Nashes, old Jags, Aston Martins. Between us, we could identify most of the cars on the road, and Stephen, I think, came to see me as an ally or a comrade in the game of car spotting. But this was as close as we ever got.

"Floating Cities" was published in February of 1991, and quickly went to the top of the best-seller list in England. Stephen was told this, and said, "Very nice." He seemed unaffected or uncomprehending, and that was the sum of it. At this point, he was going to a new technical school, learning to be a cook, taking public transport, and beginning to acquire some of the skills of independent life. But Sundays remained consecrated to drawing, and his work, commissioned and uncommissioned, multiplied each weekend.

THE question of Stephen's artistic talents often reminded me of Martin A., the retarded musical and mnemonic savant, whom I saw in the

"Our cook is working through a lot of stuff."

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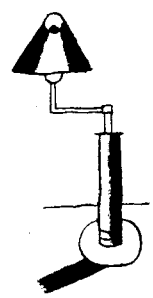
nineteen-eighties. Martin loved operas—his father had been a famous opera singer—and could retain them after a single hearing. ("I know more than two thousand operas," he once told me.) But his greatest passion was for Bach, and I thought it curious that this simple man should have such a passion. Bach seemed so intellectual, and Martin was a retardate. What I did not realize—until I started bringing in cassettes of the cantatas, of the Goldberg Variations, and, once, of the Magnificat—was that, whatever his general intellectual limitations, Martin had a musical intelligence fully up to appreciating all the structural rules and complexities of Bach, all the intricacies of contrapuntal and fugal writing; he had the musical intelligence of a professional musician.

I had never before properly recognized the cognitive structure of savant talents. I had, by and large, taken them to be an expression of rote memory, and little else. Martin did indeed have a prodigious memory, but it was clear that this memory, in relation to Bach, was structural or categorical (and, specifically, architectonic): he *understood* how the music went together, how this variation was an inversion of that, how different voices could take up a line and combine them in a canon or fugue, and he could construct a simple fugue himself. He knew, for at least a few bars ahead, how a line would go. He could not formulate this knowledge—it was not explicit or conscious—but there was a remarkable *implicit* understanding of musical form.



Having seen this in Martin, I could now see analogues in the artistic, calendrical, and calculating savants I had also worked with. All of them had a genuine intelligence, but intelligence of a peculiar sort, confined to limited cognitive domains. Indeed, savants provide the strongest evidence that there can be many different forms of intelligence, all potentially independent of each other. The psychologist Howard Gardner expresses this in "Frames of Mind":

> In the case of the *idiot savant* . . . we behold the unique sparing of one particular human ability against a background of mediocre or highly retarded human performances in other domains. . . . the existence of these populations allows us to observe the human intelligence in relative—even splendid—isolation.

Gardner postulates a multitude of separate and separable intelligences—visual, musical, lexical, etc.—all of them autonomous and independent: each with its own power of apprehending regularities and structures in its cognitive domain, and each with its own "rules," and probably its own neural basis.

In the early nineteen-eighties, this notion was put to the test by Beate Hermelin and her colleagues, who explored the powers of many different forms of savant talents. They found that visual savants were far more efficient than normal people at extracting the essential features from a scene or a design, and at drawing these, and that their memory was not photographic or eidetic but, rather, categorical and analytic, with a power to select and seize on "significant features" and use them to build their own images. It was also evident that once a structural "formula" had been extracted, it could be used to generate permutations and variations. Hermelin and her colleagues, along with Treffert, also worked with the blind, retarded, and enormously gifted musical prodigy Leslie Lemke, who, like Blind Tom a century ago, is renowned for his improvisational powers as much as for his incredible musical memory. Lemke catches the style of any composer, from Bach to Bartók, after a single hearing, and can thereafter play any piece or improvise, effortlessly, in that style.

These studies seemed to confirm Gardner's hypothesis that there were indeed a number of separate, autonomous cognitive powers or intelligences, each with its own algorithms and rules. There had been a certain tendency before this to see savant abilities as freakish, but now they seemed to have been brought back into the realm of the "normal," differing from ordinary abilities only by being isolated and heightened in degree.

But do savant powers really resemble normal ones? One cannot have contact with a Stephen, a Nadia, a Martin—with any savant—and not sense something deeply other in action. It is not just that savant performances are off the scale, statistically, or are incredibly precocious in their first appearance (Martin could sing bits of operas before he was two), but that they seem to deviate radically from normal developmental patterns. This was particularly clear with Nadia, who seemingly skipped the normal scribbling, schematic, and tadpole stages, and, when she drew, did so in a way unlike any normal child. So it was with Stephen, who at seven, we know from Chris, did "the most unchildlike drawings" he had ever seen.

The other side of the prodigiousness and precocity, the unchildlikeness, of savant gifts is that they do not seem to develop as normal talents do. They are fully fledged from the start. Stephen's art at seven was clearly prodigious, but at nineteen, though he may have developed a bit socially and personally, his talent itself had not developed too greatly.

Savant talents, further, have a more autonomous quality than normal ones. They do not seem to occupy the mind or attention fully: Stephen will look around, listen to his Walkman, sing, or even talk while he is drawing; Jedediah Buxton's huge calculations moved ahead at their own fixed, imperturbable rate while he went on with his daily life. Savant talents do not seem to be connected, as normal talents are, with the rest of the person. All this is strongly suggestive of a neural mechanism different from that which underlies normal talents.

It may be that a savant has a highly specialized, immensely developed system in the brain, a "neuromodule," and that this is "switched on" at particular times—when the right stimulus (musical, visual, or whatever) meets the system at the right time—and immediately starts to operate full blast. Thus, for the twin calendar savants, seeing an almanac at the age of six set off their extraordinary calendrical skill: they were able straightaway to see large-scale structural regularities in the calendar, perhaps to extract unconscious rules and algorithms, to see how the correspondence of dates and days could be predicted—a feat that the rest of us, if we could do it at all, could do only with consciously worked-out algorithms and a great deal of time and practice.

The converse of this sudden kindling, or turning on, is also seen on occasion in the sudden disappearance of savant talents, whether in retarded or autistic savants, or in normal individuals with savant capacities. Vladimir Nabokov possessed, in addition to his many other

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talents, a prodigious calculating gift, but it disappeared suddenly and completely, he wrote, following a high fever, with delirium, when he was seven. Nabokov felt that the calculating gift, which came and went so mysteriously, had little to do with "him" and seemed to obey laws of its own—that it was different in kind from the rest of his powers.

Normal talents do not come and go in this way: they show development, persist, enlarge, take on a personal style as they establish connections, and embed themselves increasingly in the mind and personality. They lack the peculiar isolation, uninfluenceability, and automaticity of savant talents.

But a mind is not just a collection of talents. One cannot maintain a purely composite or modular view of the mind, as many neurologists and psychologists now try to do. This removes that general quality of mind—call it reach or range or size or spaciousness—that is always instantly recognizable in normal people. It is a capacity that seems to be supramodal, and that shines through whatever particular talents there are. This is the quality which we are referring to when we say that someone has "a fine mind." What is no less important is that a modular view of the mind also removes the personal center, the self, the "I." Normally, there is a cohering and unifying power (Coleridge calls it an "esemplastic" power) that integrates all the separate faculties of mind, and integrates them, too, with our experiences and emotions, so that they take on a uniquely personal cast. It is this global, or integrating, power that allows us to generalize and reflect, to develop subjectivity and a self-conscious self.

Kurt Goldstein was especially interested in such a global capacity, which he referred to as the organism's "abstract-categorical capacity," or "abstract attitude." Part of Goldstein's work was concerned with the effects of brain damage, and he found that whenever there was extensive damage, or damage involving the frontal lobes of the brain, there tended to be, over and above the impairments of specific abilities (linguistic, visual, whatever), an impairment of abstract-categorical capacity—often as damaging as the specific impairments, and sometimes far more damaging. Goldstein also explored various developmental problems and—with his colleagues Martin Scheerer and Eva Rothmann—published the deepest study ever made of an idiot savant. Their subject, L., was a profoundly autistic boy with remarkable musical, "mathematical," and mnemonic talents. In their 1945 paper "A Case of 'Idiot Savant:' An Experimental Study of Personality Organization" they comment on the limitations of a multifactorial, or composite, theory of mind:

> [If] there exists . . . only a composite of individual capabilities which are so independent from each other . . . L. should have theoretically been able to become a proficient musician and mathematician. . . . Since this contradicts the facts of the case, we have to explain [why he did not] despite his "interests" and "training."

He did not, they conclude, because, for all his impressive and real talents, there was something else, something global, irremediably missing:

> L. suffers from an impairment of abstract attitude affecting his total behaviour throughout. This expresses itself in the linguistic sphere by his "inability" to understand or to use language in its symbolic or conceptual meaning; to grasp or formulate properties of objects in the abstract . . . to raise the question "why" regarding real happenings, to deal with fictitious situations, to comprehend their rationale. . . .
>
> Owing to his impaired abstract attitude, L. cannot develop his endowment, actively and creatively. [It remains] *abnormally* concrete, specific and sterile; it cannot become integrated with a broader meaning of the subject, nor with social insight. [It] approaches rather a caricature of a normal talent.

If Goldstein's formulations about idiot savants and autism are generally valid, and if Stephen is indeed lacking, or relatively lacking, in abstract attitude, how much of an identity, or a self, may he be able to acquire? What power of reflective consciousness may be possible for him? To what extent can he learn,

"Brian blew his entire advance on food, shelter, and clothing."

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or be influenced by personal or cultural contact? To what extent can he make such contact? How much can he develop a genuine sensibility or style? How much is any personal (as opposed to technical) development possible for him? What may be the resonances of all this for his art? These and many other questions, which one encounters with the paradox of an immense talent attached to a relatively rudimentary mind and identity, become sharper in the light of Goldstein's considerations.

"I'm fed up with excuses, Harris. When am I going to start reading about the Satanic right?"

• •

In October, 1991, I met Stephen in San Francisco. I was struck by how much he had changed since I last saw him—now seventeen, he was taller, handsomer, and his voice was deeper. He was excited to be in San Francisco and kept describing, in short, haikulike phrases, the scenes he had seen on television of the 1989 earthquake: "Bridges snapped. Cars crushed. Gas bursting. Hydrants flowing. Gaps opening. People flying."

On our first day, we climbed to the top of Pacific Heights. There Stephen started drawing Broderick Street, which snakes up to the top of the hill. He looked around vaguely while he was drawing, but was mostly engrossed in listening to his Walkman. We had asked him earlier why Broderick snaked, instead of going straight up. He could not say, or see, that it was because of its steepness, and when Margaret said "steep" to him he just repeated it, echolalically. He still seemed clearly retarded or cognitively defective.

As we walked, we came upon a sudden, enchanting revelation of the bay, dotted with ships, and with Alcatraz set like a gem in the middle. For a moment, though, I did not "see" this; I did not see a scene at all—just an intricate pattern of many colors, a highly abstract, uncategorized mass of sensations. Was this how Stephen saw it?

Stephen's favorite building in San Francisco was the Transamerica Pyramid. When I asked him why, he said, "Its shape," and then, with an uncertain air, "It's a triangle, an isosceles triangle. I like that." I was struck by the fact that Stephen, with his often primitive language, should use the word "isosceles"—though it is typical for autistic people, sometimes in early childhood, to acquire geometrical concepts and terms to a far greater degree than personal or social ones.

Stephen has very little explicit understanding of autism. This came out in an unlikely incident on Polk Street. We had, by a million-to-one chance, got behind a car with a license plate that spelled "AUTISM." I pointed it out to Stephen. "What does that say?" I asked.

He spelled it out, laboriously: "A-u-t-i-s-m."

"Yes," I said. "And that reads?"

"U . . . u . . . utism," he stuttered.

"Almost, not quite. Not 'utism'—'autism.' What is autism?"

"It's what's on that license plate," he answered, and I could get no further.

Clearly, he recognizes that he is different, that he is special. He has a veritable passion for "Rain Man" and, one must suspect, identifies with the Dustin Hoffman character, perhaps the only autistic hero ever widely portrayed. He has the entire soundtrack of the film on tape, and plays it continually on his Walkman. Indeed, he can recite large segments of the dialogue, taking every part, with perfect intonation. (His preoccupation with the film and his constant playing of the cassette has not distracted him at all from his art—he can draw wonderfully even though his attention seems to be elsewhere—but it has made him far less accessible to conversation and social contact.)

Accompanying Stephen's obsession with "Rain Man" was a fervent desire to visit Las Vegas. He wanted, when we got there, to spend time in a casino, as Rain Man had, and not, in his usual way, to see the buildings in town. So we spent a single night there, and then, in a 1991 Lincoln Continental, set out across the desert for Arizona. "He would have preferred a 1972 Chevrolet Impala," Margaret told me, but this, to Stephen's disappointment, was not available.

We pulled up to a parking lot near the Grand Canyon. Part of the Canyon was visible from there, but Stephen's attention was immediately distracted by the other cars in the lot. When I asked what he thought of the Canyon, he said, "It's very, *very* nice—a very nice scene."

"What does it remind you of?"

"Like buildings, architecture," he answered.

We found a spot from which Stephen could draw the North Rim of the Canyon. He started to draw, less fluently and assuredly, perhaps, than he

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would draw a building; but he seemed to extract the basic architecture of the rocks nonetheless.

"You're a genius, Stephen," Margaret remarked.

Stephen nodded, smiled, said, "Ya, ya."

Knowing Stephen's love of aerial views, we decided to fly over the Grand Canyon in a helicopter. Stephen was excited, and kept craning his neck in all directions as we flew low through the Canyon, skimming the North Rim, and then higher and higher to get a bird's-eye view of the whole. Our pilot kept talking about the geology and the history of the Canyon, but Stephen ignored him, and, I think, saw only shapes—lines, boundaries, shadows, shadings, colors, perspectives. And I, sitting next to him, following his gaze, started, I imagined, to see the Canyon through his eyes, relinquishing my own intellectual knowledge of the rock strata below, and seeing them in purely visual terms. Stephen had no scientific knowledge or interest; could not, I suspect, have grasped any of the concepts of geology; and yet such was the force of his perceptual power, his visual sympathy, that he was able to get, and later draw, the Canyon's geological features with absolute precision, and with a selectivity not to be obtained in any photograph. He would get the Canyon's feel, its essence, as he had got the essence of the Matisse.

One morning in Phoenix—the last morning of our trip—I was up at seven-thirty, watching the sunrise from my hotel-room balcony. I heard a cheery "Hullo, Oliver!" and there was Stephen on an adjacent balcony.

"Wonderful day," he said, and then, holding his yellow camera, he snapped me as I smiled back from my balcony. This seemed such a friendly, personal act—it would stay in my mind as our farewell to Arizona. As we left the hotel, he went over to the cacti: "Bye, Saguaro! Bye, Barrel! Bye, Prickly Pear, see you next time!"

At one point on our Arizona trip, stopping at a Dairy Queen, Stephen ogled two girls sitting at a table and, indeed, was so fascinated by them that he forgot to go to the rest room. In some ways, he is a normal adolescent boy; neither his autism nor his savantism precludes this. He went up to the girls. He is not unpersonable on first impression, but he spoke to them in a manner so inappropriate and childlike that they looked at each other, giggled, and then ignored him.

Adolescence, both physical and psychological, was perhaps slightly belated but now seems to be rushing ahead with great speed. Suddenly, Stephen has developed a strong interest in his appearance, his clothes, rock music, and girls. He had never seemed to notice mirrors when he was younger, Margaret said, but now he is always checking himself, preening before them. He has developed very decided tastes in clothing: "I like Western-style jeans, light-blue, garment-washed, and shirts, and black Western boots."

"What do you think of Oliver's shoes?" Margaret asked archly on one occasion.

"Boring," he said, throwing a glance at them.

And yet, very little social life is possible for Stephen. He meets people, superficially, but does not know how to talk with them and has few friends or real relationships outside his own family or the Hewsons. He is very close to his sister, Annette, and can be affectionate to her. He feels himself the man of the house, a protector of his mother; and he feels that Margaret is very much a protector of him. But for the most part he is thrown back on his drawings, and on increasingly charged and detailed daydreams.

The world that really excites Stephen at this point is that of "Beverly Hills 90210," a television show he adores. Last year, I asked him about it: "I love Jennie Garth," he said. "She's the coolest girl in L.A. She's got red lipstick. . . . She's twenty-one years old. She's from Illinois. She's in 'Beverly Hills 90210.' I fell in love with Jennie Garth. It started in 1991, I think. She plays Kelly Taylor. She always wears jeans and Western-style shirts and bodysuits." It is not just Jennie Garth but the entire cast of the show that Stephen is in love with, and he now incorporates its members in more and more elaborate fantasies. "I collect their pictures," he said. "I sent them several drawings." Now he wants to design a penthouse for them on Park Avenue. They will all live together, and he will live with them, as "artist-in-residence." He will decide who may visit

"We've decided not to end the marriage immediately but to let it play itself out."

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them and who may not. In the evening, after they have worked all day, they will all eat out together, or have a picnic in the penthouse. He has drawings of all this.

He has also been making sexy fantasy drawings of girls. Margaret discovered this by accident one day while they were travelling: she wandered into his hotel room and found a drawing by his bed. His other drawings—even the grandest ones, which he has spent days making—he is almost indifferent to; they can get lost or damaged, and he scarcely cares. But the sexy drawings are manifestly different. He seems to feel these as his own, and keeps them in the privacy of his room; he would not think of showing them to anyone. They are wholly different from his other drawings, his commissioned work, for they are an expression of his inner life and dreams and needs, of his emotional and personal identity; whereas the architectural drawings, however dazzlingly accomplished, are not intended as anything more than likenesses, reproductions.

Stephen's interest in girls and his fantasies of them seem very normal—very adolescent, in a way—and yet they are marked by a childishness, a naïveté, that reflects his deep lack of human and social knowledge. It is difficult to imagine him dating, much less enjoying a deep personal or sexual relationship. These things, one suspects, may never be possible for him. I wonder whether he feels this, and perhaps feels sad about it sometimes.

ALBUMS: THE WILD WEST

(After Laforgue)

I'm reading about life on the prairie and frontier
When my heart cries, "Hey, you could live here!"
Outcast from the old world, a "desperado"
Without God or governance, where could I not go?
Out there I'll scalp my European brain,
Run wild like a young colt on the open plain—
A sort of postliterate, Huck Finn child of nature
Or existential citizen of the future,
An idealistic rustic, rancher, architect,
Hunter, fisherman, gambler, above party and sect;
And live, buckskin-clad, on "Bourbon" and pot roast
Between salt Utah and the Pacific Coast,
Sleeping out under pre-Columbian skies
More generous than our bourgeois certainties!
And? A mystique of campsites, the "Lynch" law,
Rough diamonds to clutch in my grubby paw,
A gold rush over the desert at first light,
A poker school around the fire at night . . .
When I grow old, a farm in the sunrise,
A dairy cow, grandchildren at my knees
And, on the horned gates wrought with my own skill,
A split-pine signboard reading "Lazy L."
And if fond memories of the Place Vendôme
Or the high hopes of my contemporaries
Should tempt me into thoughts of going home,
Or the rocky buzzard come to symbolize
The infinite, as opposed to the purple sage,
I'll start a new cult of the Golden Age
With its own code based on holistic books,
Blithe and postmodern, for the postpastoral folks.

So much for pipe dreams; so much for the joys
Of picture books, my not imperishable toys!

—Derek Mahon

In July of 1993, Margaret phoned me, beside herself with excitement. "Stephen's erupted musical powers," she announced. "*Huge* powers! You must come and see him straightaway." I was startled by her call; I had never heard her so excited.

It had been clear to all of us for years that Stephen had an immense ability to reproduce instrumental sounds, voices, accents, intonations, melodies, rhythms, arias, songs, complete with words or lyrics when need be—an effortlessly large and accurate auditory memory. And, significantly, he liked music, too; it moved him with an almost physical pleasure—almost more, I think, than drawing did.

But Margaret, who knew all this better than I, was obviously referring to something more, to some quite new and unexpected breakthrough. The crucial factor, she had said, had been finding the right music teacher for Stephen ("She's marvellous, darling!"), and they had struck up an instant rapport. I timed a visit to London to coincide with one of their weekly music lessons and took along my niece Liz Chase, a music teacher and pianist with a very acute ear, skilled in improvisation, analysis, and theory.

Liz and I had been chatting with Evie Preston, his music teacher, for a few minutes when Stephen came in, gustily, at the stroke of twelve. "Hullo, Evie, how are you I am fine," he said, then "Hullo, Oliver Sacks, how are you?" and, when I introduced my niece, "Hullo, Liz Chase, how are you?" He then rushed over to the piano and, at Evie's bidding, proceeded to play scales, then to sing arpeggios, starting with major triads. He did all this very easily, and gleefully. The idea of thirds, fifths—this Pythagorean, numerical sense of musical intervals—seemed innate in Stephen. "I never had to teach him," Evie remarked.

He seemed hungry for more. "Let's do sevenths now," Evie said, and Stephen nodded and chortled as if he had been promised a chocolate.

Next, Evie said, "Now we'll do the blues—you take the top, I'll do the

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"The banks liked him, but that was about it."

• •

bass." Using only three fingers (it looked ungainly, but worked brilliantly), Stephen now improvised an upper voice, full of fascinating, delightful complications. At first, he confined his improvisations to the lower half of one octave, but then became bolder, his improvisations steadily growing wider-ranging, more complex. He did six improvisations in all, rising to a climax in the last one. But, Liz said, "improvisation is easy, you do it off the top of your head." If one had the musical intelligence to catch the variational structure, she added, an ability to generate variations was almost automatic, a defining quality of intelligence itself. What she did find remarkable was how Stephen had imbued his improvisations with feeling, with something of himself; how he had made them "creative, daring, and dramatically interesting."

Evie asked Stephen if he would sing "Wonderful World." His singing seemed to be full of genuine feeling, and his gestures while he sang were not his usual stilted, ticlike ones. As soon as the song was over, Evie asked him to analyze it harmonically, to sing and number all the chords. He did so without a moment's hesitation. "It is clear that he is possessed of quite extraordinary powers of harmonic identification, analysis, and reproduction," Liz noted. Then Evie gave him an exercise in "interpretation," as she does every week, playing a theme he has never heard before. This time, it was Schumann's "Träumerei." Stephen listened intently and told us his "associations" as he listened: "It's about . . . air in the field, daffodils in springtime . . . a stream . . . sunshine . . . (I love it) . . . rose gardens . . . light breezes, fresh . . . children come out to play with their friends."

Was Stephen—so lacking feeling or cut off from it, for the most part—actually feeling these affects and moods? Or had he learned—been taught, somehow—to "decode" music, to learn that such-and-such forms were "pastoral" or "vernal," and, as such, would have appropriate images? Was this a sort of trick, performed without any real feeling? I mentioned this thought to Evie later, and she told me that at first his associations with music were random or egocentric, strikingly irrelevant to the actual tone of the piece. She then explained what feelings or images "went with" different forms of music, and now he has learned these. But she thinks he also feels them.

Finally, it was time for Stephen to choose a song he wanted to perform. He wanted to do "It's Not Unusual," a song much to his liking—a piece on which he could really let himself go. He sang with great enthusiasm, swinging his hips, dancing, gesticulating, miming, clutching an imaginary microphone to his mouth, addressing himself in imagination to a vast arena. "It's Not Unusual" has become the theme song of Tom Jones, and Stephen, in his version, took on Jones's flamboyant physicality, adding to it a flavor of Stevie Wonder. He seemed completely at one with the music, completely possessed, and at this point there was none of the skewed neck posture that is habitual with him, none of the stiltedness, the ticcing, the aversion of gaze. His entire autistic persona, it seemed, had totally vanished, replaced by movements that were free, graceful, with emotional appropriateness and range. Very startled by this transformation, I wrote in large capitals in my notebook, "AUTISM DISAPPEARS." But, as soon as the music stopped, Stephen looked autistic once again.

Until now, it had seemed to be part of Stephen's nature, part of his being autistic, to be defective precisely in that range of emotions and states of mind that defines a "self" for the rest of us. And yet in the music he seemed to have been "given" these, to have "borrowed" an identity—even if they were lost the moment the music ended.

It was as if, for a brief time, he had become truly alive.

STEPHEN'S music lesson, then, was a revelation to me—not just of further talents (which would not be wholly unexpected in an autistic savant) but of a *mode of being* that I would not have thought available to him. Nothing of what I had seen with him before, and nothing in his art, had quite prepared me for this. He seemed to be using his whole self, his whole body, with its full repertoire of movements and expressions, to sing, to enact the song—though it remained unclear to me whether this was basically a brilliant piece of pantomime or a true entering into the words, the feelings, the inner

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states of the song. It raised for me, even more acutely than some of his Matisse drawings, the question of whether he treated the originals (paintings or songs) as representations of inwardness, of others' states of mind, or as *objects*. Did he, so to speak, enter the painter's or the songwriter's head, share their subjectivity, or merely treat their productions (like houses) as purely physical, as objects? (Was his repetition of "Rain Man," for that matter, just a literal playback, a mimicry or echolalia, or was it charged with a sense of the significance of the film?) Were his gifts no more than mindless, "ament" talents, in Goldstein's term, or were they genuine achievements of mind and identity—achievements which might assist him, despite all that impeded him, to a fuller personal consciousness and identity?

Goldstein is quick to equate "mind" with the abstract-categorical, the conceptual, and to regard anything else as pathological, as sterile. But there are forms of health, of mind, other than the conceptual, although neurologists and psychologists rarely give these their due. There is mimesis—itself a power of mind, a way of representing reality with one's body and senses, a uniquely human capacity no less important than symbol or language. Merlin Donald, in "The Origins of the Modern Mind," has speculated that mimetic powers of modelling, or inner representation, of a wholly nonverbal and nonconceptual type may have been the dominant mode of cognition for a million years or more in our immediate predecessor, *Homo erectus*, before the advent of abstract thought and language in *Homo sapiens*. As I watched Stephen sing and mime, I wondered if one might not understand at least some aspects of autism and savantism in terms of the normal development, even hypertrophy, of mimesis-based brain systems, this ancient mode of cognition, coupled with a relative failure in the development of more modern, symbol-based ones. And yet, even if some analogies can be drawn here, they are very limited, and must not mislead us. Stephen is neither an ament nor a computer nor a *Homo erectus:* all our models, all our terms break down before him.

We do not know, finally, how Stephen thinks, how he constructs the world, how he is able to draw and sing. But we do know that, though he may be lacking in the symbolic, the abstract, he has a sort of genius for concrete or mimetic representation, whether drawing a cathedral, a canyon, a flower or enacting a scene, a drama, a song—a sort of genius for catching the formal features, the structural logic, the style, the "thisness" (though not necessarily the meaning) of whatever he portrays.

Creativity, as usually understood, entails not only a "what," a talent, but a "who"—strong personal characteristics, a strong identity, personal sensibility, a personal style, which flow into the talent, interfuse it, give it personal body and form. Creativity in this sense involves the power to originate, to break away from the existing ways of looking at things, to move freely in the realm of the imagination, to create and recreate worlds fully in one's mind—while supervising all this with a critical inner eye. Creativity has to do with inner life—with the flow of new ideas and strong feelings.

Creativity in this sense will probably never be possible for Stephen. But the catching of "thisness"—perceptual genius—is no small gift; it is quite as rare and precious as more intellectual gifts. I once referred to José as living not in a universe but in what William James called a "multiverse," consisting of innumerable, unconnected, though intensely vivid, particulars, and as experiencing the world as, in Proust's term, "a collection of moments"—isolated, with no before or after. I imagined José, who liked to draw animals and plants, as an illustrator for botanical works or herbals (and, indeed, I have since heard that an autistic artist has been employed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, at Kew).

Is autism necessary to, or an ingredient of, Stephen's art? Most autists are not artists, as most artists are not autists; but in the chance of their coming together (as in Stephen or José), there must, I think, be an interaction between the two, so that the art takes on some of the strengths and weaknesses of autism, its remarkable capacity for minutely detailed reproduction and representation, but also its repetitiveness and stereotypy. But whether one can speak of a distinctive "autistic art" I am not sure.

Is Stephen, or his autism, changed by his art? Here, I think, the answer is no. I do not have the feeling that his art spreads or diffuses, in any sense, into his character, or alters the general tone of his mind. But this, perhaps, is not entirely surprising: there are many examples of artists who are great, even sublime, in their art, but whose personal lives are unremarkable, incoherent, or vile. (There are others, of course, whose lives match their art.)

Of those with classical autism, fifty per cent are mute, never use speech; ninety-five per cent lead very limited lives. Stephen, in a sense, has escaped from these statistics, in part through his art, in part by virtue of those who have stood so committedly behind him. Gifts and art, unrecognized, unsupported, are not enough: José is almost as gifted as Stephen but has never been recognized, never supported, and continues to languish on a back ward, whereas Stephen lives a varied and stimulating life—he travels, goes out drawing, and now attends art school. Margaret Hewson, Chris Marris, and others have played an essential part in supporting him and nurturing his gifts, making possible for him his present creative life. But his passivity remains extreme, and he will continue, I think, to need such personal support, as Blind Tom needed the support of Colonel Bethune.

Stephen's drawings may never develop, may never add up to a major opus, an expression of a deep feeling or theory or view of the world. And *he* may never develop, or enter the full estate, the grandeur and misery, of being human, of man.

But this is not to diminish him, or to call his gifts small. His limitations, paradoxically, can serve as strengths, too. His vision is valuable, it seems to me, precisely because it conveys a wonderfully direct, unconceptualized view of the world. Stephen may be limited, odd, idiosyncratic, autistic; but it is given him to achieve what few of us do—a significant representation and investigation of the world. ♦

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SKETCHBOOK · BY SUE COE

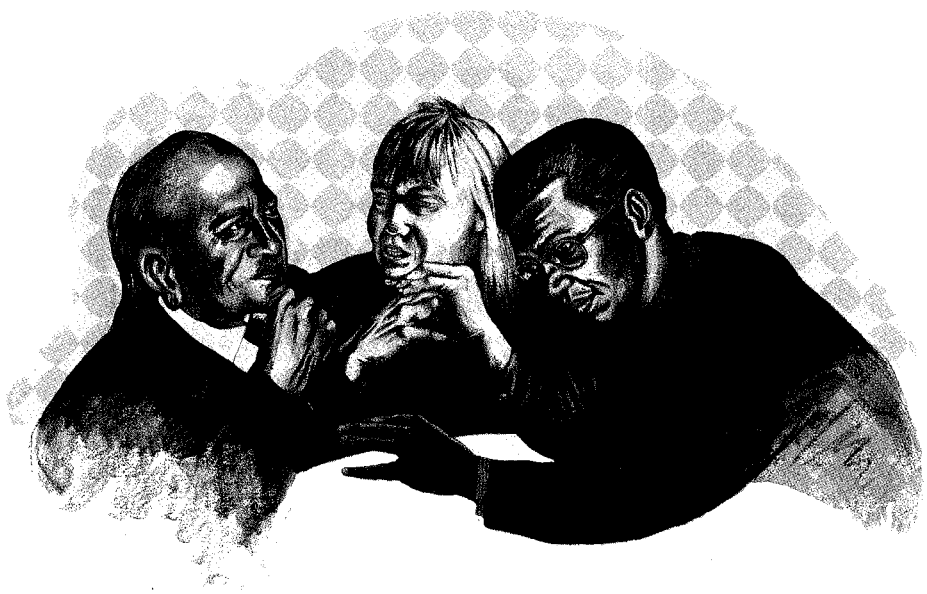
KEEPING VIGIL

LAST year was a singularly bad year for human rights around the world, one in which genocidal "cleansing" was not only conceived and planned but in at least two places—Bosnia and Rwanda—carried out, while the world looked on ineffectually. In United States foreign policy, human-rights considerations fell ever further behind narrow mercantile interests. And yet, despite the desolation, individual monitors all over the world maintained heroic vigils. This was made inspiringly evident when Human Rights Watch recently tried to bring a representative nine to New York.

—LAWRENCE WESCHLER

Around the world, twenty-four human-rights monitors were killed (or disappeared) this past year—including eleven in Rwanda alone. In Haiti, Jean-Claude Jean, the secretary-general of the Haitian Human Rights Platform, was forced into hiding after the murder of his colleague Father Jean-Marie Vincent.

Moncef Marzouqi, Tunisia's leading rights activist, is so threatening to his supposedly democratic government that it forbade him to travel to New York. His teen-age daughter arrived in his stead.



I. A. Rehman, of Pakistan's Human Rights Commission (left), has to contend with such abuses as Islamic blasphemy laws that mandate but one penalty: death. (He urged his hosts to fight the impending death-penalty proposal in New York.) Deborah Labelle is a Michigan lawyer who monitors the detention conditions among America's exploding population of women prisoners. Peter Volmink, of Cape Town, told his colleagues that he began his career in apartheid South Africa as a prosecutor, of all things: when some young people who had confessed to crimes were brought before him, he saw that they had been savagely beaten, and had the police arrested and charged instead.

Neither post-Communism nor post-colonialism has necessarily brought greater human freedom. In Bulgaria, the philosopher Dimitrina Petrova has been championing the rights of the country's most beleaguered and marginalized minority, its Gypsies. The lawyer Joseph Mudumbi maintains his rights vigil in Goma, Zaire. In April, as more than a million Rwandan refugees poured over the border into his small town, he went back into their country in order to rescue dozens of imperilled colleagues.

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Father Ricardo Rezende, a poet and a parish priest in Rio Maria, in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, tries to call attention to the violence perpetrated upon rural workers and those who have attempted to organize them. Here he holds up a photograph of a dear friend, the unionist Expedito Ribeiro de Souza, who was murdered in 1991. Father Ricardo's name has shown up on the hit list of a local death squad. Of the forty people on the list, five have been killed in the last several months. Still, he's going back to Rio Maria.

Bao Tong was a reformist member of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee in 1989. Denounced as an architect of the student uprising, he was arrested, and has been held in solitary confinement ever since, his health steadily failing. His son, Bao Pu, now a student in the United States, continues to work in behalf of his father's ideals.

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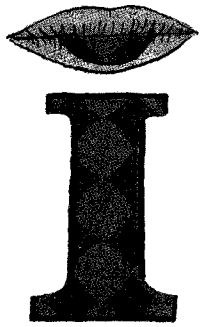
FICTION

THUMBSUCKER

BY WALTER KIRN



IT was the one thing I'd always done. Even breathing did not go back to the womb. Being part of a circle of arm, mouth, body connected me to myself. This circle is what they tried to break the summer I turned thirteen.

The appetite was neither thirst nor hunger but seemed to include them both. It could come at any time: while I was waiting in winter darkness for the school bus, fretting about Glen Stone, the bully who sat behind me in civics class and liked to rap his knuckles on my skull. Or I'd be walking past the bathroom, humming and pressing my hands against my ears to block out the sound of Mike, my father, singing high and tunelessly about the other lawyers in his firm: "Oh, Dan, you son of a bitch, you've cut my balls off" or "Give me a shot, Mr. Boone, oh, one small chance." Or maybe I was at the dinner table, watching my hyper little brother, Joel, spread so much butter on a slice of bread that his teeth left disgusting clifflike marks.

The effect when the thumb touched my lips was subtle and encompassing. Because I sometimes watched myself in a mirror, doubling my sense of self-communion, I know how I looked at the moment of closure. Above my greedily flexing cheeks, my eyes would soften and blur as though I'd just put drops in. My forehead would relax and lose its lines. From the rhythmic bullfrog swelling of my throat, it appeared I was actually taking nourishment. I felt I was.

WHEN Mike began his campaign against my habit, the idea of it didn't seem to anger him. With his pipes and cigars and Red Man chewing tobacco, it's possible he even sympathized. What he didn't like was that I'd developed an overbite and he was getting the orthodontist's bills. One night, when Mike was complaining, I said, "I thought your insurance paid for everything." We were in the TV room watching Nixon, who everyone said would be impeached that summer. Mike had voted for him. We still had Nixon stickers on our cars, nicked and shredded from my mother's attempts to scrape them off with a razor blade.

"You seem to think insurance is free," said Mike. He spat brown tobacco juice into the beer can he was holding against his lower lip. "In point of fact, Neil, my entire firm is paying for what you're doing to your teeth."

"I didn't know that," I said. "I'm sorry."

Mike looked at Nixon's scared, pale face and sighed. "Insurance just spreads the costs, it doesn't eliminate them. Why can't you people get that through your heads?"

That was what Mike called our family—you people.

Our dentist was a man named Perry Lyman. Like Mike, he worked in St. Paul and commuted from our little town of Shandstrom Falls. Before outsiders started moving there, in the late sixties, the town had been a quiet trading center for dairy farmers, but its large, inexpensive Victorian houses and proximity to the St. Croix River attracted a stream of outdoorsy young professionals. They brought with them new sports that hadn't yet spread across the Midwest: cross-country skiing, bike touring, kayak racing. Rallies and races were held every month or two, announced by flyers posted at the General Store. Mike competed in all these events. He held his own, but the winner always seemed to be Perry Lyman.

I could see why. Perry Lyman was steady, intense, and able to pace himself, while Mike's attitude of clenched ferocity burned him out mid-race. Perry Lyman seemed to take pleasure in sports, while Mike's interest was Spartan, almost survivalist, as though he were in training for the day when civilization would fail and men would have to paddle and ski great distances, gathering food and supplies.

Perry Lyman was a kind of hippie, though with short, mossy brown hair. He smoked pot—I saw a roach clip in his office one day while he was adjusting my retainer, and I knew what it was from the sheriff's anti-drug display at the county fair. He was a hippie in other ways, too. He preferred hypnosis to anesthetics and liked to prescribe simple exercises for the correction of minor malformations. The year before he gave me a retainer, he'd actually had me using my fingers to push my top teeth back. I pushed for an hour each night after dinner and gave myself low-level headaches.

Though Perry Lyman knew the real reason, he pretended to blame my overbite on an odd nocturnal tongue motion supposedly common in boys my age. In explaining this habit, he introduced me to the word "subconscious" and the idea of involuntary behavior. I instantly recognized the all-purpose excuse I'd been seeking all my life.

"So if people can't help things they do," I said, "why punish them?"

"It has nothing do with changing the offender. It's merely society working out its rage."

"I see."

"There's a group subconscious, too," he said. "It's complicated."

"It makes sense to me."

The day of my retainer fitting, I sat in Perry Lyman's padded chair and gazed around at rainbow-colored posters reminding me that "A Smile Is Forever" and "If You Love Something, Let It Go." While I breathed through my nose, Perry Lyman packed my mouth with gray mint-flavored putty, then had me bite down to make an impression. Two weeks later he gave me my "appliance," a pink plastic, crab-shaped object ringed by wires and ridged on top to match my wrinkled palate.

I was supposed to wear the retainer all night and as much as possible during the day. I did this for two weeks, de-

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spite some problems. The wires seemed too tight and made my gums sore. Also, the retainer smelled bad, collecting a fizzy white scum between its lifelike creases. It did have one advantage, however: by heightening my awareness of my mouth, the retainer seemed to reduce the chance I'd forget myself in public.

This was an ever-present fear. Scotty Erickson, a skin-and-bones foster child with digestive problems, had been hounded into switching schools when our seventh-grade class found out he wore a diaper. I expected similar treatment if I lowered my guard. I'd learned that the trick was never to relax. Whether watching TV with a friend or sitting with my teammates in the Little League dugout, I had to maintain a vigilant alertness.

The person I had to be most careful around was Rebecca Crane. Rebecca had long, dark center-parted hair and a narrow, foot-shaped face. Like me, she rarely smiled, though it had nothing to do with her teeth. Rebecca was a serious girl, devoted to endangered species. She wrote poems about the baby seal, using words such as "holocaust," and once got a warning from the principal for circulating petitions at school. Listening to her talk about porpoises and gorillas absorbed my whole attention, and without the retainer's presence I'm sure I would have revealed myself in front of her.

One day Rebecca and I went bird-watching along the railroad tracks. Around us were hay fields mowed into stripes. With the retainer snug against my palate, I felt secure and I let myself relax completely—the first time I'd ever dared.

"I feel like taking my shirt off," I said. Rebecca was scanning a pasture with binoculars. I felt bold.

"Go ahead," she said. "Look—a red-winged blackbird."

"You take yours off, too," I said.

"My stomach will get a sunburn that my dad will see. He'll ask me what I've been doing."

"Your dad looks at your naked stomach?"

"He checks my body for wood ticks. Doesn't yours?"

"With me it's Audrey, my mom," I admitted.

Rebecca lowered her binoculars. "Why do you call your folks by their first names, Neil?"

"Mike says when I call him Dad he feels old and I sound like a child. When he hears me call Audrey Mom, then *she* seems old to him."

Finally, I got Rebecca to take her shirt off. Her bra straps made delicious red nicks in her soft, pale shoulders and I saw how the cups were carrying real weight. The sight thrilled me, but in bed that night, when I thought of Rebecca's father inspecting her body for ticks, I got anxious. When I opened my eyes in the morning my thumb was snugly seated in my cheek and the retainer was sitting on my pillow, staring back at me like an odd little sea creature. I never put it in my mouth again.

On the Fourth of July, as half the town looked on, Mike lost a kayak race to Perry Lyman. Mike finished a distant second, which might have been a close second if he hadn't flung his paddle away when he saw he was losing. That night, as he and Audrey and Joel and I sat on a blanket in the Lions' Park, watching fireworks, he suddenly clamped his hand on my right wrist and yanked out my thumb. It made a popping sound.

"You look like a baby," said Mike. "You're pathetic. When are you going to cut this out? My God."

On its own, it seemed, my thumb slipped right back in.

"You don't even *try* to stop," Mike said.

"I do, too," I mumbled with my thumb in.

"Well, I'm going to help you try a little harder."

Mike's first idea was Suk No Mor, a cayenne-pepper preparation whose label showed a throbbing red thumb tip radiating jagged lines of pain. I sat at the kitchen table reading *Family Circle* as Audrey dabbed the liquid on my thumbnail using the plastic wand from the bottle. She worked daintily, like a manicurist, and asked me questions I found personal.

"How much do you like this Rebecca? Have you kissed her yet?"

"It says in here club soda gets out blood stains."

"You can tell me, Neil. I won't be angry."

"Why would you be angry if I kissed someone?"

"I wouldn't be angry, I told you. So *have* you?"

"Wine and grass stains, too."

I spent the rest of that day by the river with Rebecca. Whenever she wasn't looking, I sneaked a quick lick at the Suk No Mor. She caught me once and I pretended I was biting my nail. The first hot, peppery shocks were followed by numbness, and by the time we turned to walk back home I'd licked the stuff clean off. I sensed Rebecca waiting for me to hug her and slide my hand up the front of her shirt, but I couldn't relax enough to do it. I had begun to be vigilant again.

"It's time we were honest and open," Perry Lyman said. We were sitting face to face: me in the dental chair, wearing a paper bib, and he at his little prescription-writing desk, his restless right foot playing with the pedal of his trash can. "The retainer won't work if you never wear it, and your father won't pay for braces," he said. "It's time to confront the underlying issue, Neil. I know what your problem is. I can help you stop."

I watched the trash-can lid flip up and down.

"It's an understandable habit," Perry Lyman said. "In fact, what's strange is that people ever quit. It's nature's substitute for the female breast."

I knew this, but somehow it didn't help to hear it.

"I'd like to try hypnosis," Perry Lyman said.

"Hypnosis?"

"God knows it's better than essence of red pepper. Was that your father's idea?"

I nodded.

"I see he's entered the Labor Day bike race."

"He trains every day before work," I said. "Twenty-one miles."

"No kidding? What's his time?"

"He hasn't told me. Hypnosis, huh?"

Perry Lyman slowly let the lid down. "I think it can help you kick this thing. I do."

Perry Lyman couldn't perform the hypnosis right away. Each morning during my week of waiting, Mike used a purple Flair pen to print his initials on the pad of my right thumb: M.F. He gripped my wrist to steady my

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"Don't get secular with me, pal."

• •

hand, and my fingers went numb. At night he checked for fadedness and smearing. He'd promised me a portable TV if I managed to go a month, but I knew from experience he'd forget the deal if I succeeded in keeping up my end of it. He had a way of forgetting those things.

"You *swear*?" I said the second night, after Mike inspected my thumb. "You swear it won't be like the Honda and the chin-ups?" A year ago, Mike had promised me a dirt bike if I tried for the President's Physical Fitness certificate at school. I'd missed the award by three chin-ups and gotten nothing.

"What Honda? When?" Mike said.

One afternoon Rebecca startled me by asking what the writing on my thumb was. She had a cold and was at her house, wrapped in a blanket. She shared her codeine cough syrup with me. Her wet brown eyes looked drugged and trusting, and for a light-headed moment or two I considered telling her the truth. I felt the confession slowly rising inside me like a bubble in honey.

Then I panicked.

"M.F. It stands for 'motherfuck,' " I said.

Tears came into Rebecca's staring eyes. "Why do you always have to act so tough? Don't you trust me?"

"Motherfuck," I said.

I SHUT my eyes and let my hunched-up shoulders relax as music featuring harp, piano, and birdsong drifted from a tape player on Perry Lyman's desk. His voice was low and gentle. "Safety surrounds you. Peace invades your being. Security such as you've never known descends." He circled me as he spoke, stirring currents in the Lysoled air. His rubber-soled shoes made a sticky, peeling sound.

"Imagine yourself on a path," he said after several more minutes of warmup. "You're deep in the forest. You glimpse a clearing. In its center, a shaft of yellow light shines down, illuminating a wild animal."

I wondered if I was "under" and concluded that if I could be wondering this I wasn't. Perry Lyman's voice, annoyingly smooth and aware of its own resonance, kept on about the animal, calling it my "power animal" and urging me to see it in detail. Eventually, I managed to picture a deer. Seen straight on, it had the face of Scotty Erickson, the diaper boy, but when it looked away it was a deer again.

"When you feel the urge," said Perry Lyman, "call your power animal for help. It will comfort you and give you strength. Call it to you now."

"Come here," I whispered.

"Do it in your *mind*."

I did it in my mind.

When I got up from the chair, I was surprised at how heavy and warm my arms and legs felt. I remembered reading an article about a professional hockey team that had been hypnotized before a playoff game. I asked Perry Lyman if he used hypnosis to help himself win races.

"In fact, I do. I find it very focussing."

"What's your power animal?" I said.

Perry Lyman glanced at the poster above his desk, a poster from the Sierra Club.

"That's private," he said.

"Come on."

"I'm sorry. It's just not the same, I'm afraid, if other people know."

The poster showed a pack of running wolves.

WHEN people try to quit things, other things take their places. A woman stops smoking and begins inhaling pizza. A man cuts out doughnuts and starts taking trips to Atlantic City. After Perry Lyman hypnotized me, my desire just drained away, and so did all the pleasure. My thumb became a neutral thing, like the end of a broomstick in my mouth.

"What's the crushed, defeated expression?" Mike said to me one morn-

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ing, sitting down to breakfast after his bike ride. His face was red and sweaty and invigorated.

"It's my crushed, defeated expression."

All I could think about was Rebecca. Suddenly, with leechlike intensity, I had to be around her all the time. As soon as her father's car drove off each morning, I hurried to her porch and rang the doorbell, loaded down with field guides and binoculars. When I sensed her interest in bird-watching decreasing, I started buying the movie magazines I'd seen her reading with her older sister. Day after day, I presented Rebecca with Hollywood trivia questions and fun facts.

"What's Farrah Fawcett's beauty secret?"

"Do we?"

"She rinses her hair in beer."

"I said 'Do we?,' Neil."

" 'Do we' what, Rebecca?"

"Do we care?"

I watched Rebecca grow to despise me. My shining moment with her—ordering her to remove her shirt and facing her down, bare-chested, until she did—seemed impossible to re-create now that I cared so deeply about her opinion of me. My attentions took on a doomed and ingrown quality. I would insult myself in front of her, saying I was ugly, stupid, short, and then resent her for not contradicting me. When I saw how much she pitied wayward movie stars, I began to regret not having confessed my weakness. That would have won her over, I felt sure, but now it was too late.

One day on her porch, with her father standing behind her, his big hands on her shoulders, Rebecca said, "Neil, we think you're bothering me. We want you to stop coming over."

"Move it, son."

For the last time, I sought solace in my thumb. I felt nothing, nothing came out—no comfort, no relief. My thumb felt dead and so did my body.

I blamed everyone, but especially Perry Lyman. He'd pretended to be my friend but had snatched my soul.

THE course of the Labor Day bike race ran, for part of its twenty-fifth mile, through a highway tunnel. The cyclists emerging from darkness made for dramatic snapshots, so spectators liked to gather at one end. I stood with Joel in the barrow ditch on the other side, where no one could see what we were going to do.

Perry Lyman approached, head down, pedalling with the steady, flowing strokes that usually guaranteed him victory. The hazy dot behind him was Mike. I signalled Joel to raise the sign I'd made, then broke into a trot along the road. I saw Perry Lyman glance over at the sign and I noticed his front tire wobbling. That's when I started howling. Joel howled, too. The howls came out of me like weird black scarves. They scared me. And they rattled Perry Lyman. He turned and flipped me the bird as he passed, a look of disintegration on his face. He couldn't have known what he'd done to deserve this—the bloody wolf sign and my demented yapping. I knew at that moment that I'd broken his power, just as he had mine. In a photo Audrey took of him emerging from the tunnel, he had the face of a man who knew he'd lose.

He came in fifth. Mike was first.

That night at our back-yard picnic table, when Joel and Audrey went in to get some knives, I said to Mike, "You owe me a TV set."

His hand grazed around in a bowl of salted nuts, pausing for the almonds. He was still lost in the haze of victory, and I knew I could get away with more than usual. In front of him was a foaming-over beer can and a can he hadn't opened yet. Mike had been having an extra drink with dinner since Nixon had resigned, a month ago.

"I knew you'd forget," I said, reaching for a beer. "I knew you wouldn't pay up."

"Pay up for what?"

Mike watched me open the beer and start to gulp it. I opened my throat and let the cold pour into me.

"Easy," he said. "Slow down. A sip or two."

I think we both knew that would be impossible.

If nothing else, the crisis in cosmology demonstrates that there is much more to understanding cosmic history than is immediately revealed in the Big Band theory, however well established it may have become through rigorous testing.

—*The Times.*

Is that "Stardust" they're playing?

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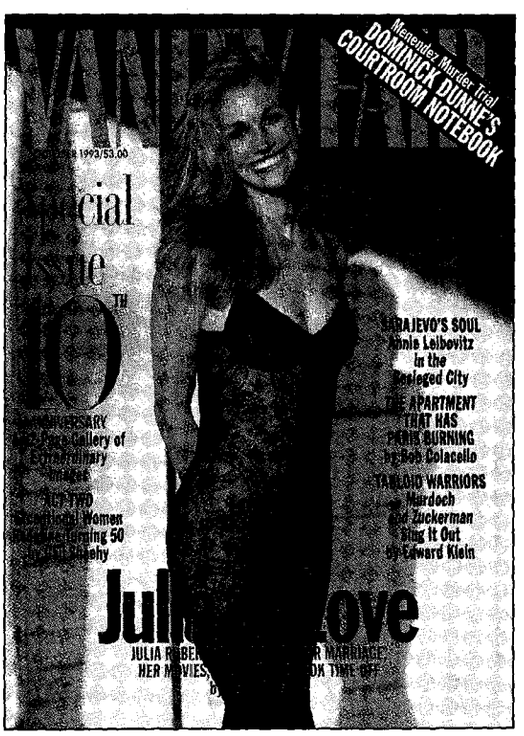

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PUBLIC ACADEMY

A new generation of black thinkers is becoming the most dynamic force in the American intellectual arena since the fifties.

BY MICHAEL BÉRUBÉ

TEN years ago, writing in the inaugural issue of the academic journal *Cultural Critique*, Cornel West surveyed the scene of black intellectual activity in the United States and found it barren. "The quantity and quality of black intellectual exchange is at its worst since the Civil War," he wrote. "There is no major black academic journal; no major black intellectual magazine; no major black periodical of highbrow journalism; not even a major black newspaper of national scope. In short, the black infrastructure for intellectual discourse and dialogue is nearly nonexistent." West fingered two primary causes of this intellectual impoverishment: integration, "which has yielded mere marginal black groups within the professional disciplines of a fragmented academic community"; and "the widespread refusal of black intellectuals to remain, in some visible way, organically linked with African-American cultural life." In West's view, one of the unintended effects of the civil-rights movement was that élite, formerly all-white universities wound up institutionalizing the African-American intelligentsia, thereby insuring that its work would never again roam free in—or keep its "organic" links to—the world outside the academy.

It is strange to relate, then, that a few weeks ago, in a shopping mall somewhere on the American prairie, I wandered into the local McBooks store to find fully half its "Current Affairs" section occupied by the work of black intellectuals, chief among them Cornel West himself, peering back at me from the cover of "Race Matters." In the picture, he looks calm and composed, an Emersonian sage sitting on a rooftop in East Harlem; but, as he tells his readers in the book's preface, he showed up late for the photo shoot that day, because not a single midtown taxi would stop for him. It is symptomatic of America in the nineteen-nineties that—as he also writes in his preface—the internationally renowned director of a black-studies program at an Ivy League university would be stopped by police three times in ten days for driving too slowly in his own neighborhood. And yet it is also symptomatic that above his photograph on the jacket of "Race Matters" are the words "National Bestseller."

West's book is flanked by two new books, "Outlaw Culture" (Routledge; $49.95 cloth, $15.95 paper) and "Teaching to Transgress" (Routledge; $49.95 cloth, $15.95 paper), both by Bell Hooks. Three shelves above them is the latest book from Michael Eric Dyson, "Making Malcolm: The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X" (Oxford; $19.95). I look over the blurbs on the back cover. Weighing in are Cornel West, Angela Davis, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun. That's an impressive range already, but it's the last blurb that really raises my eyebrows. It's from Chuck D, of the rap group Public Enemy, who says of Dyson, "He's a bad brother. Check out his new book 'Making Malcolm' by all means." Well, I think, it's a rare book from Oxford that gets plugs from a philosopher, a couple of politicians, *and* a rapper.

Such a thing may not be rare much longer. Something new is happening in American cultural history, and it can be gauged neither by tales of racist traffic cops nor by flattering endorsements from hip-hop superstars. A decade after Cornel West issued his baleful diagnosis, a new African-American intelligentsia has become part of this country's cultural landscape. It's a development as noticeable as the ascendancy of the New York intellectuals after the Second World War. Like the New York intellectuals, the new black intellectuals are, to varying degrees, public figures, and, like the New York intellectuals, they seek to redefine what it means to be an intellectual in the United States. Whether lecturing in churches or testifying on Capitol Hill, they have the burden and the blessing of a constituency, a public—which is something that

Redefining the public intellectual: Michael Eric Dyson, Bell Hooks, Derrick Bell, Cornel West.

COLLAGE BY MCDAVID HENDERSON; PHOTOS (LEFT TO RIGHT): MARK ROYCE; DONNA DIERICH COURTESY OF ESSENCE MAGAZINE; OUTLINE

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PAPER DOLLS

To some it might
have seemed vulgar
or degrading that
he was naked,
but for a wrinkled sheet.
Straight as candles,
his legs exposed
the eroding candelabrum
that was his body.
As directed,
no priest was present.
So when his mouth,
chapped and bleeding,
locked on a breath
we believed was the last,
the other of us
ran wailing down
the long blue corridor
for a nurse
who came to us
as Demeter had
to the frozen earth.
On the windowsill,
red tulips
stopped their grieving
as we kissed
what remained
goodbye
in a scene
at first holy,
then lurid,
as something stirred
beneath the sheet.
On the night table,
paper dolls cut
like shackled lions
roared at his entrance.

—HENRI COLE

most so-called public intellectuals can only invoke.

They didn't all attend City College, they don't all live in the same city, and they have no journal as powerful as *Partisan Review* was in its heyday. But they are identifiable—and not only for being young, gifted, and black, as the saying goes. They *are* young in academic terms (that is, under forty-five); they tend to be concentrated along the Eastern Seaboard; and they can usually be found in humanities departments and law schools. But they are coming of age at an extraordinary cultural moment, amid a myriad of explosions in black popular culture, from Hollywood to hip-hop, and a series of staggering implosions in American race relations, from Howard Beach to the Clarence Thomas–Anita Hill debacle and the 1992 riots in Los Angeles. Where Lionel Trilling's "The Liberal Imagination" set the measure for cultural criticism in its time, Cornel West's "Race Matters" may set the measure for ours. It's a disquieting prospect, of course, to be "measured" by a book on racial injustice. Even so, when one recalls that Trilling's epochal collection of essays sold an astonishing hundred thousand copies (thereby helping to establish the genre of the "serious" paperback), it may seem all the more significant that Cornel West's collection has already sold well over twice that many. And though Bell Hooks (née Gloria Watkins) looks and sounds nothing like the late Irving Howe, she now has the same title at City College that he once held at CUNY; namely, distinguished professor.

Michael Eric Dyson appeared on the scene only in the past few years, but Hooks and West have been working away since the early eighties, publishing books every few years with small houses like South End Press or the University of Wisconsin Press, and earning themselves a devoted, but still limited, following. West's star really began rising with the nineties, and in the fall of 1994 Hooks, too, hit her stride, with Routledge, the large trade and scholarly publisher, releasing two hefty books by her simultaneously—in apparent accord with the Bruce Springsteen approach to product placement. Though no one has yet proposed a boxed set of Bell Hooks' greatest hits, the impact of her books on students and teachers has been palpable. In the movies, underemployed college graduates may sit around in coffee shops reading Heidegger's "Being and Time" (as does a character in Ben Stiller's twenty-something flick "Reality Bites"), but real campus coffee shops these days are much more likely to be filled with waiters reading "Making Malcolm" and riot grrrls perusing "Outlaw Culture."

Perhaps it's one of history's ironies that, in the past half century, the New York intellectual has become a popular American icon: the learned cosmopolitan whose erudition once marked the difference between "culture" and "mass culture" is now a standard reference point in mass culture. And yet when wistful scholars of the twenty-first century look back on the golden age of the American public intellectual, they may think not only of the audiences served by Trilling and Irving Howe but of those belonging to the black intellectuals of the nineteen-nineties.

OF course, there have been black intellectuals on these shores from 1619 or so, and Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells were about as effective in their day as any nineteenth-century public intellectual could hope to be. What was lacking, until very recently, was a black public sphere of commensurate size. Even in the nineteen-twenties, when writers of the Harlem Renaissance set out to theorize about the relation between lumpen black folk and what Zora Neale Hurston wryly called the "niggerati," black intellectuals were playing to a small crowd indeed. As Langston Hughes put it, "The ordinary Negroes hadn't heard of the Negro Renaissance. And if they had, it hadn't raised their wages any."

Until the nineteen-sixties, America's nationally known black intellectuals tended also to be its nationally known black novelists—the triumvirate of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin, two of whom eventually chose exile over life in their native land. Meanwhile, within the tiny public arena bounded by segregation, African-American intellectuals like Oliver Cromwell Cox, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, J. Saunders Redding, and Carter G. Woodson were creating African-American history, sociology, and literary criticism in black colleges, black journals like *Phylon* and *The Crisis*, and black newspapers like the Pittsburgh *Courier* and the *Afro-American* (published in five Eastern cities). But as long as segregation prevailed in higher education and in the publishing world it was quite easy for white Americans to believe that—Wright, Ellison, and Baldwin aside—the most important books on race in this country were written by white Americans.

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That much, anyway, has changed about the American mind. Thirty years after Du Bois gave up on America and renounced his citizenship, African-Americans have emphatically taken the lead in the national conversation about "the Negro problem." Indeed, what's distinctive about this generation of African-American intellectuals is that their work has become a fixture of mall bookstores, talk shows, élite universities, and black popular culture. Plainly, they have consolidated the gains of the civil-rights and Black Power movements in at least this regard: they have the ability and the resources to represent themselves in public on their own terms.

That's not to say that their attitude toward desegregation is simply celebratory. In "Teaching to Transgress" Bell Hooks warmly recalls "the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterized teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black schools" (as opposed to desegregated white schools, where, she writes, "too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority"); Cornel West and Michael Eric Dyson speak of the pathologies that come from constantly seeking white peer approval; and "Confronting Authority: Reflections of an Ardent Protester" (Beacon; $20), by their elder colleague Derrick Bell, relates how, in the late nineteen-fifties, he joined the newly formed Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice only to be told that his membership in the N.A.A.C.P. constituted a "conflict of interest." So they've had good reason to be circumspect about integration. And yet it's one of the two developments that have made possible the emergence of black academics as public intellectuals. The other, of course, is the expansion of academe itself—and its gradual incorporation of the American intelligentsia.

To be sure, there are still plenty of black intellectuals who aren't college professors, among them activists like Marian Wright Edelman; cultural critics like Stanley Crouch, Lisa Jones, and Darryl Pinckney; and poets like Essex Hemphill. But even Gerald Early, Michele Wallace, and Shelby Steele, whose reputations rest almost entirely on their general-audience publications, hold full-time academic appointments; and when you add to that list figures like Patricia Williams, Stephen L. Carter, Lani Guinier, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Randall Kennedy you find that the black intellectuals of the eighties and nineties have decisively rebutted the claim that academe has been the death of the public intellectual. Though their positions of privilege have occasioned a certain amount of soul-searching (Hooks' "Teaching to Transgress" opens with a description of her violently mixed emotions about being granted tenure—having job security yet feeling walled in), there's a sense in which this dilemma reprises that of many New York intellectuals in the fifties, when they found themselves both threatened and energized by their academic embourgeoisement. Where Daniel Bell was criticized for buying nice furniture in his forties, Bell Hooks now draws stares for driving a BMW.

WHAT Marxism was to Lionel Trilling, Clement Greenberg, Philip Rahv, and company, black nationalism is to West, Gates, Hooks, et al.: the inspiration, the springboard, the template, but also the antagonist and the goad. Just as the postwar Jewish intelligentsia largely abandoned radical politics but remained committed to rethinking America's progressivist traditions (often by delivering scathing critiques of radical politics), the black intelligentsia of our fin de siècle has largely abandoned cultural nationalism while remaining committed to rethinking forms of African-American collectivity (often by delivering scathing critiques of cultural nationalism). But the new intellectuals have a markedly different relation to the vernacular of their time. A major part of what the New York intellectuals represented, in cultural politics, was a collocation of the politics of anti-Communism with the literature of high modernism—something that required its inventors to erect a cordon sanitaire protecting "real" culture from contamination by the kitsch, dreck, schlock, pop, and camp that surrounded it. One cannot imagine, given the past decade's controversies over black popular culture, the new black intelligentsia adopting the same cultural politics. Nor should it. As West writes in "Race Matters," "One irony of our present moment is that just as young black men are murdered, maimed, and imprisoned in record numbers, their styles have become disproportionately influential in shaping popular culture"—and black intellectuals have

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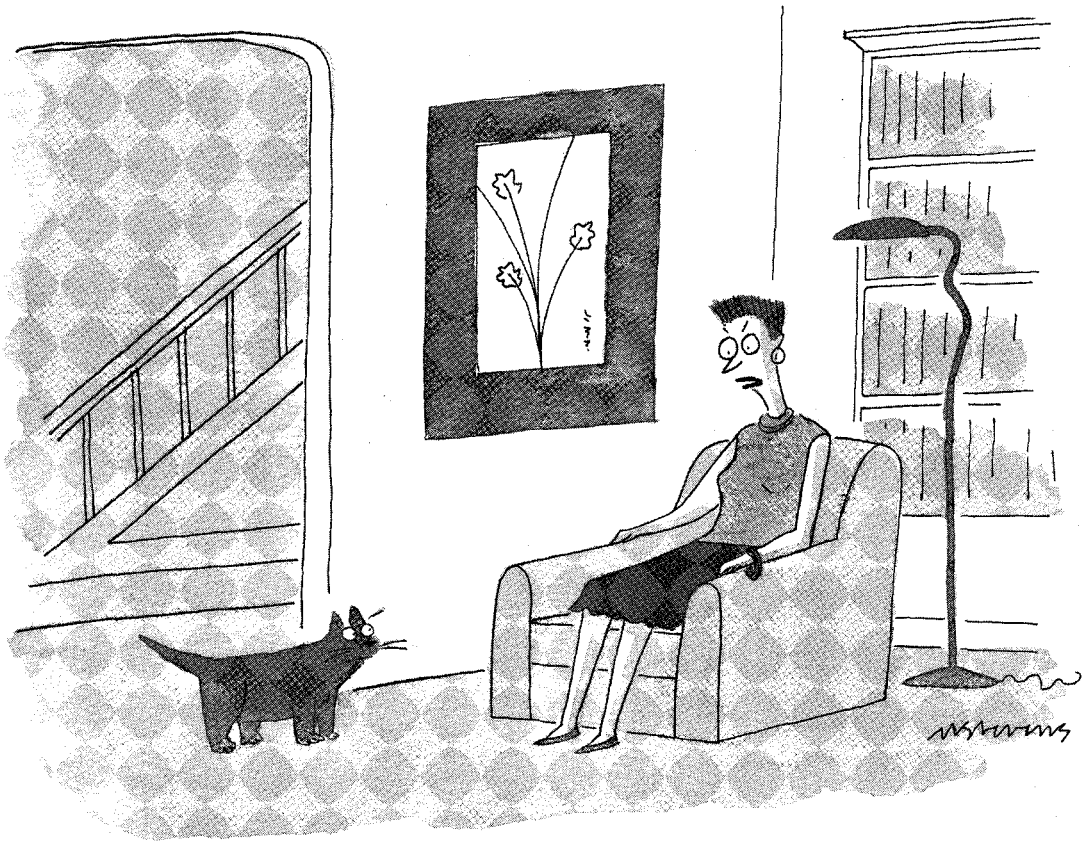

"You just don't get it, do you?"

• •

become singularly influential as interpreters of this moment and its ironies.

Nowhere are the terms of the new dispensation clearer than in the debates over the legacy of Malcolm X. By any standard, that legacy is vast: Malcolm's life and career resound through the recent history of black nationalism, of black music, art, and religion. And as Martin Luther King, Jr., has been at once deified and depoliticized, his contentious career boiled down to a few words he uttered about a dream he had in 1963, Malcolm's stature has grown to the point where he now serves as an icon of the black urban underclass—and, more narrowly, black urban masculinity—in crisis. But, unlike their Afrocentric colleagues, West, Dyson, and company take Malcolm not merely as an exemplar of black nationalism's political potency but as a test case of its political limitations. "Like most black nationalists, Malcolm X feared the culturally hybrid character of black life," West writes in "Race Matters." Dyson's view of black nationalism is still more severe. "Those most aided by its successes have rarely stuck around to witness the misery of those most hurt by its failures," he maintains. "The greatest irony of contemporary black nationalism may be its use by members of the black middle class—for instance, black intellectuals and artists thoroughly insulated in niches of protection within the academy—to consolidate their class interests *at the expense* of working-class and poor blacks."

Yet both contemporary hardcore rap and contemporary black cinema have been shaped by Malcolm's influence, and that means that any intellectual recasting of his legacy must take account of nineties neo-nationalism in a profusion of popular-cultural forms—forms that few traditional intellectuals are at home with. Dyson's book is clearly the most ambitious effort to come to terms with this profusion. It not only analyzes nearly every important biography and scholarly study of Malcolm to date but takes on hip-hop culture and a cluster of recent films centered on the crisis of black masculinity (films like "Boyz N the Hood," "New Jack City," and "Menace II Society"). Charting Malcolm's "ideological blindnesses, his strategic weakness, his organizational limitations, and his sometimes bristling moral contradictions" alongside his deeply principled denunciations of white racism and black accommodationism, Dyson gives us Malcolm as "public moralist"—and a study that is as substantive and comprehensive as "public" cultural criticism of such a figure can hope to be.

A full chapter of the book is devoted to Spike Lee's "Malcolm X"—our era's preëminent black nationalist in the hands of our preëminent black neo-nationalist director. Few films have sparked so wide-ranging a debate in the African-American community, and Dyson's treatment of the film is lucid and balanced—weighing Lee's "commercialization of Malcolm's memory" against his "richly textured and subtly nuanced evocation" of Malcolm's life. Dyson is *so* lucid and balanced, in fact, that I almost began to prefer Bell Hooks' decidedly gnarled and skewed treatment of the film in "Outlaw Culture." According to Hooks, Lee is really a Hollywood insider pretending to be an outsider; she maintains that "Lee's work cannot be revolutionary and generate wealth at the same time." It follows that Lee has simply sold out, by "reproducing conservative and even stereotypical images of blackness so as not to alienate that crossover audience," and leaving filmgoers with a Malcolm who "has more in common with Steven Spielberg's representation of Mister in the film version of 'The Color Purple' than with real-life portraits of Malcolm X."

This is an outrageously unfair reading of Lee's film, but, as is often the case with Bell Hooks' work, the essay's impact as critical provocation is in part a function of its audacity. Hooks' forays into popular culture often undertake the kind of sweeping, indiscriminate critique that one finds oneself arguing with on every page. There's hardly a book, record, or film in circulation that she can't denounce as reactionary, whether she's berating "What's

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Love Got to Do with It" for giving us "Ike's story" on Tina Turner, or Madonna for exploiting gay culture. Where Hooks is reckless, however, she is also fearless: Michael Eric Dyson stops at merely remarking on Malcolm X's sustained inattention to gender politics, but Hooks starts by noting that "critical scholarship on Malcolm X contains no *substantial* work from a feminist standpoint," and proceeds to criticize no less sainted a figure than Malcolm's widow. Indeed, Hooks is at her best in debates over the meaning and the future of feminism—particularly when she's taking on the post-feminists who seem to have captured the hearts of C-SPAN, *Playboy*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and *Esquire*. Here, for example, is a setup from that renowned motormouth Camille Paglia: "I'm very loud. I've had a hell of a time in academe. This is why I usually get along with African Americans. I mean, when we're together, 'Whooo!' It's like I feel totally *myself*—we just let everything go!" And here's how Hooks, in "Outlaw Culture," handles this slow, fat pitch over the middle of the plate: "Naturally, all black Americans were more than pleased to have Miss Camille give us this vote of confidence, since we live to make it possible for white girls like herself to have a place where they can be 'totally' themselves."

THE occasional Manichaeanism of Hooks' rhetoric—the sense that the merit of a work can be determined by its contribution to the cause—is a common feature of political criticism, whether practiced by Granville Hicks or by Hilton Kramer. For black intellectuals, however, the problem has another dimension, which affects their assessment not only of popular culture but of their social roles as well. Because non-black audiences are still the ones that have the power to put black artists at the top of the charts, African-American intellectuals' uneasiness about black commercial and professional success stems in part from the long-standing fear that "crossing over" must entail selling out. It's what leads to Hooks' attack on Lee—the unstated suspicion that any critical or commercial success with white audiences is, de facto, political failure.

So if black public intellectuals are legitimated by their sense of a constituency, they're hamstrung by it, too: they can be charged with betraying that constituency as easily as they can be credited with rep-

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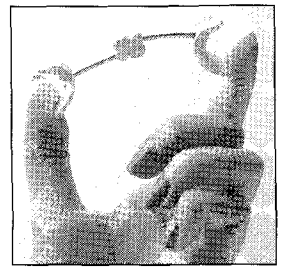

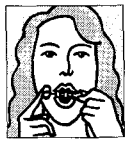

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resenting it. On the one hand, they have an unprecedented opportunity to speak from, to, and for a public, since their professional bona fides depend not on their repudiation of vernacular African-American culture but on their engagement with it. On the other hand, they inhabit an intellectual tradition of extreme sensitivity toward the issue of who represents what to whom—a tradition in which the weightiest term of disapprobation is that familiar bludgeon "Uncle Tom."

For Cornel West, the uneasiness about representing "the public" also stems from his pointed critique of American consumer culture: the world of brand names and product placement, of corporate campaigns designed, he writes, to "entice and titillate consumers," constructing "the public" not as a citizenry but as a market for Air Jordans and St. Ides malt liquor. In West's distinctive blend of socialist politics and preacherly appeals to black spiritual renewal, this culture of consumption is cast as one of the prime causes of black "nihilism" and social disarray. The public, West insists, is coextensive with the commodity: Visa is everywhere we want to be. West is far from sanguine about what this means for the African-American public; his latest collection is entitled "Keeping Faith," but it sounds a sombre basso continuo of near-despair.

"The proper starting point for the crucial debate about the prospects for black America is an examination of the nihilism that increasingly pervades black communities," he writes in "Race Matters." This is a risky position for any progressive social critic, and particularly for any black social critic who appeals for the remediation of black poverty but does not wish to present poor blacks as, yet again, passive "targets" for social reform or as participant-victims of a dysfunctional culture. West wants to generate concern about the black poor without pathologizing them (or construing the black middle class as greedy wannabes); at the same time, he wants to defend "traditional morality" and traditional institutions, like churches and schools, from that dread culture of consumption without simply reciting the neoconservative mantras—religion, family values, private associations—of our day. It's a tricky double play, and he doesn't always pull it off. The fact is that it's often difficult to distinguish between conservative and progressive critiques of the social corrosiveness of consumer capital. For one thing, both points of view tend to rely on the idea of some once unalienated human community that has been violated by modernity: leftists can look back at precapitalist gemeinschaft and conservatives can long for the agrarian pastoral with more or less the same ardor. It's remarkable but altogether fitting that West's work turns out to make some common cause with that of the cultural conservative Daniel Bell—who "in stark contrast to black conservatives," West writes, "highlights the larger social and cultural forces, for example, consumerism and hedonism, which undermine the Protestant ethic and its concomitant values." Maybe it's safer to run the risk of exaggerating the hopelessness of the black underclass than to run the risk of soft-pedalling its plight. But though West's reading of black nihilism is compelling, it's not the only story worth telling—particularly to white folks who hear nothing else. For every posse of nihilists on the streets, there may well be a housing activist at work, or a graffiti artist on his way to the Whitney.

AND what of the black conservative intellectuals? They may not be coffee-shop mainstays, but they've been busy nonetheless. In fact, Thomas Sowell has just published his most important book since "Race and Economics" (1975), the book that made him the right's point man in the fight against affirmative action. But, though it will certainly get its hearing at the Heritage Foundation, Sowell's "Race and Culture: A World View" (Basic; $25) is in danger of being lost in the crush of his younger and more agile competitors, who can leap from Kierkegaard to KRS-One in a single bound. One might well take Sowell's resolute unhipness as a sign of his intellectual strength. But at times his analysis looks frankly dated, as when he faults

contemporary social science for not attending to the details of "culture"—apparently oblivious of the culturalist turn of the past two decades. "Race and Culture" may aspire to a role in national policy debates, but it's not clear what role it can plausibly play. For instance, in a crucial section of the book Sowell argues against the presumption that intelligence tests are "biased" against underprivileged groups, noting that such groups do worst on abstract test questions with no "cultural" content, and that performance is independent of variation in income within the group. "This does not prove that cultural bias is not present," he admits, "but it does indicate that any such bias must take a very different form from what is usually assumed or portrayed." Fair enough, but then the critical issue is whether that more nebulous bias can be redressed. Sowell notes that the United States' first foray into comprehensive intelligence testing, during the First World War, showed a kind of reverse Lake Wobegon effect: most Irish, Russian, Italian, and Polish immigrants had below normal intelligence. Sixty-seven per cent of Anglo-American test-takers, by contrast, were above normal. The question for policymakers, therefore, is this: Did America's European-immigrant populations get smarter in three generations thanks to their own pluck and initiative, or do I.Q. scores reflect groups' histories of access to high-quality education? Sowell refuses to say. "For many practical purposes," he concludes, "it makes no real difference whether poor performances in abstract thinking are due to neglect or to lack of capacity." But this is no conclusion at all, since if groups' differences *are* attributable to "neglect"—or, worse, to active discrimination—then Sowell has inadvertently demonstrated the necessity for precisely the kind of ambitious social programs that his career has been dedicated to attacking.

Still, criticizing Sowell is not so simple as this. For, despite its weaknesses, his oeuvre stands—or should stand—as a powerful reminder to his progressive counterparts that public intellectual work does not consist exclusively of deconstructing Spike Lee, historicizing Malcolm X, deliberating over gangsta rap on "Donahue," or debating the future of feminism in *Ms.* The current crop of left public intellectuals may take on matters of public concern, but, a few law profes-

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sors aside, they don't always take on matters of public policy—and, needless to say, they don't always have the impact on public debate that Sowell (or such conservative co-religionists as Alan Keyes and Glenn Loury) has thus far enjoyed.

One reason for that, surely, is the sometimes unconvincing mixture of rarefied theoretical discourse and heartfelt populist rhetoric you find among many academics on the left. It's hard to know what any professional legislator would make of Bell Hooks' critique of Madonna: "Within the sphere of Madonna's pornographic gaze, gayness is reinscribed as a trope within the cultural narrative of patriarchal pornographic sexual hedonism." Yet there's a broader reason for the poor fit between left public intellectuals and public policy, and it has to do with contemporary cultural criticism's uncertain sense of the "political." Of course, any self-respecting progressive intellectual will tell you (repeatedly) that intellectual work is "political" work. But not every kind of "political" work has political effects, and at times it seems that you can redraw the map of cultural politics without touching the practical-political map of precincts, districts, policymakers, and appropriations committees. Where the left tends to address itself to culture, the right—even when it takes up the topic of "culture"—tends to address itself to policy. It's all too clear who does, and who doesn't, benefit from this curious division of labor. West, Dyson, and Hooks define themselves as "radical democrats"—committed, they would say, to the principle that every citizen should participate as fully as possible in the debates that shape his or her society and culture. And yet democracy is but a form; it does not specify outcomes, nor does it dictate political affiliations of the radicals working at its roots. In a sense, therefore, Ralph Reed, the thirty-three-year-old executive director of the Christian Coalition, has been a better—that is, a more effective—radical democrat than most of those who aspire to that label.

Nor is fluency in popular culture a guarantor of popular influence. In the preface to "Making Malcolm," Michael Eric Dyson recounts that when he quoted Snoop Doggy Dogg during a United States Senate subcommittee hearing on gangsta rap he was told by a young black admirer that "for a guy your age, you really can flow." He's right to be pleased at the compliment. An intellectual generation that responds broadly and sympathetically to popular culture has numerous advantages over an intellectual generation that defines itself against popular culture. But for cultural critics the danger of popular acclaim is that it can tempt them to pay more attention to the responses of young admirers than to the deliberations of Senate subcommittees. And it can tempt them to pull their punches, as when Bell Hooks, in an interview with the rap artist Ice Cube that appears in "Outlaw Culture," sounds uncharacteristically tentative about Cube's misogynistic lyrics and declines even to ask about his role as a pitchman for St. Ides. Intellectuals need not be so arrogant as to claim to occupy the cultural vanguard, but in renouncing that role they need not settle for the role of fan, disk jockey, or press agent.

Nothing about the new black intellectuals' work so far suggests that they will settle for such a role; the political stakes are too high, the crisis of the African-American underclass is too urgent. And the crisis of African-American intellectual life is not without its own urgency: traditional intellectuals ridicule the members of the rising generation as being more concerned with hip-hop than with health care, more worried about getting tenure than about stopping torture; nationalist intellectuals excoriate them for appearing in "white-controlled" media, from C-SPAN to publishing houses owned by Time Warner. For every critic who laments that progressive black intellectuals are not sufficiently incorporated into the machinery of social policy, there's an equal and opposite critic lamenting that progressive black intellectuals are too thoroughly incorporated—that they've crossed over, sold out.

Whether or not they can possibly sell out in a way that makes a difference to national politics is another question. Indeed, watching the American left redefine the terrain of cultural politics while practical political positions to the left of Bill Clinton disappear from the map, one begins to wonder if there isn't a sense, even in the work of the most prolific and capable black public intellectuals, that cultural politics is a kind of compensation for practical politics—more satisfying, more supple, more susceptible to sheer intellectual virtuosity, because it involves neither revenues nor statutes. Not that the celebrated New York intellectuals of yesteryear held any clear advantage in the realm of practical politics: Lionel Trilling had no hand in Truman's Far East policies, nor did

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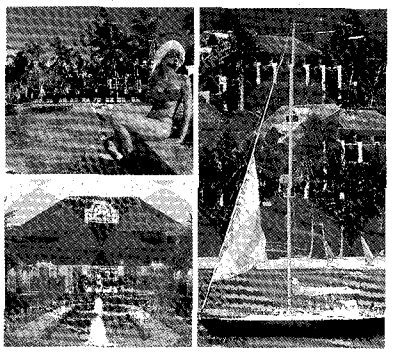

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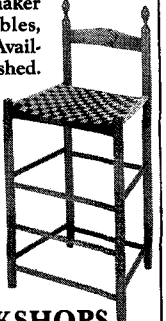

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Philip Rahv help enforce Brown v. Board of Education. My guess is that the new black intellectuals will have a significant influence on the American political agenda when, and only when, a national party runs on the slogan "It's the social justice, stupid." I'm not counting on seeing this anytime soon.

The overwhelming irony here is that black public intellectuals are doing their work—at colleges, in churches, and on cable TV—at a time when the very idea of "the public" has become nearly unthinkable in national politics. Such has been the signal achievement of the New Right, whose religious wing has built its organizations on the bedrock of home, school, and family while attacking the realm of the public in the name of the people. Public housing, public education, public health, public ownership, public welfare—to much of the American electorate these terms signify that which is not in the public interest. Black public intellectuals like West and Hooks may have a large following, but the paradoxical conditions under which they operate dictate that they will have to revivify the nation's faith in "the public" if their work is going to have broad political consequences. The measure of their success will be the degree to which they help generate a sense of the public as elastic and capacious as their sense of the intellectual. ♦

PUNCH-DRUNK

The prize-winning British book that everyone loves to hate.

BY TOM SHONE

"How Late It Was, How Late" (Norton; $21), by the Scottish writer James Kelman, is a three-hundred-and-seventy-four-page novel given over entirely to the monologue of a blind, foulmouthed Glaswegian called Sammy. For Kelman fans, it's the latest installment in a career spent waging war against the higher registers of the English language; his past fiction—mostly short stories—has delighted in seizing English by the lapels, dunking it in the gutter, and shaking it into vulgar idiomatic life. But in the case of this novel Kelman's vituperative method seems to have proved contagious: the decision, in October, to award him the Booker Prize for fiction—Britain's most prestigious literary award—prompted an all-out slanging match.

James Kelman

The decision was immediately disowned by one of the prize judges (as "a disgrace") and attacked by the more excitable sections of the British press (as "literary vandalism"). One bookshop in Rye has taken to advertising the book with a sticker that reads, "Why have none of you bought this tale of a foulmouthed drunk yet? It has been adjudged a great work of literature, and it is your duty! P.S.:—You are allowed to buy something more enjoyable at the same time." The news that he's not great company wouldn't mean much to Sammy, whose idea of a good time just about stretches to the solitary pleasures of a self-rolled cigarette, but, as for being labelled a foulmouthed drunk—well, he's a bit touchy about his drinking. "These cunts that thought he was an alky boozebag bastard, they were wrong," he says. "They werenay fucking half."

There are, at a rough estimate, four thousand "F" words in the novel. It's often said by Kelman's defenders that he uses swear words as punctuation—a statement that has always made me worry about the example being set your average impressionable young comma. Sure enough, the punctuation of "How Late It Was, How Late" shows all the effects of hanging out with such bad

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company. Many of the full stops have simply split, leaving the prose at the mercy of commas that kick in like spurs, and semicolons whose false promise of rest serves merely to bully exhausted sentences along to the point of collapse. "Up and walking, up and walking; showing here he wouldnay be toppling, he was fine, he was okay, he was doing it, the bold Sammy, he was doing it, he was on his way, he was fucking going places; and he moved on."

You can't help hearing Beckett in those gasping cadences—imagine "Endgame" 's Hamm emptied out of his armchair onto the streets of Glasgow and you're halfway to "How Late It Was, How Late." The plot doesn't cover much ground, but then neither does Sammy. Blinded by a police beating, he spends most of the novel fumbling his way from apartment to social-security office, being given the runaround, and winding up in prison again on a series of unspecified charges. As he puts it: "Bang, wallop, fuckt." All things considered, it's a response of model equanimity. But then his is the sort of king-sized depression that has long since kicked itself free of circumstantial cues or causes. In fact, it almost seems to have drifted free of Sammy himself. We first see it hanging over the book's dedication like a black cloud. "Alasdair Gray, Tom Leonard, Agnes Owens and Jeff Torrington are still around, thank christ," Kelman writes of his fellow-countrymen.

We never get a formal introduction to Sammy, unless your definition of formal includes being buttonholed on page 1: here he is, "slumped in this corner, with these thoughts filling ye. And oh christ his back was sore." You begin to see what you've let yourself in for: a narrative voice that manages to try on first, second, *and* third person for size and yet still feels as spacious as a straitjacket. It never loosens for a second: the novel divulges Sammy's biographical details with the reluctance of one ex-con ratting on another. We find out on page 194 that he was married, on page 253 that he is thirty-eight, on page 296 that he has a fifteen-year-old son. You may thrill at the austere, paranoid architecture of Kelman's logic—Sammy spends so much of the novel having his words used as evidence against him by the police that his author is damned if he'll join in the interrogation—but you don't buy it for a second. Sammy is less a character than a narrative strategy with extra stubble.

Indeed, for a novel so reluctant to credit any form of authenticity above gutter level, "How Late It Was, How Late" can at times seem a dangerously academic exercise: Sammy's various afflictions—blindness, blind drunkenness, blind justice—sit there like a bad Ph.D.-title pun just waiting to be made. Small acts of kindness from a neighbor, a passing pedestrian, a bus conductor threaten to shine through his epistemological blackout, but they are soon scuffed with ingratitude and sent back where they came from. Blanket or boot, handshake or half nelson, it's all the same to him: condescension from a "dyed-in-the-wool fucking upper-class bampot bastard." The novel is so unilaterally aggressive that I kept expecting a little pop-up fist to give me the finger every time I turned the page.

All this makes it ridiculously easy to dislike the book; "How Late It Was, How Late" spends so much of its time angling for a brawl that it almost feels like bad manners not to take just a tiny bit of umbrage. But it is actually at its weakest when Kelman starts making peaceful overtures to the reader: bedecking Sammy with a politically enlightened set of attitudes toward blacks, women, and gays; trying to sneak in the odd maudlin note with snatches of lyrics by Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson. At one point, Sammy reveals an unlikely ambition as a pop lyricist himself, and considers taping a few minutes of rant and mailing it to one of his favorite singers. Hmm. The thought of Willie Nelson—loose cannon though he is—hunkering on down to the mike, cuing up the band, and belting out "He felt bad now, so fucking bad, these things filling yer head fucking filling yer head, terrible, fucking terrible" doesn't quite cut it.

Neither does the novel. "How Late It Was, How Late" is admirable, exhausting, and about as enjoyable as a kick in the gut. It takes some beating. But then so does its protagonist. Bang, wallop, fuckt, Bookered. Sammy would have been horrified had he known. One up to the bampots. ♦

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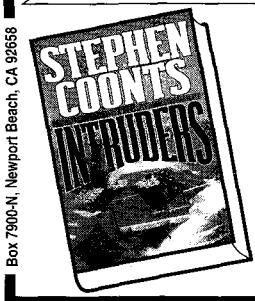

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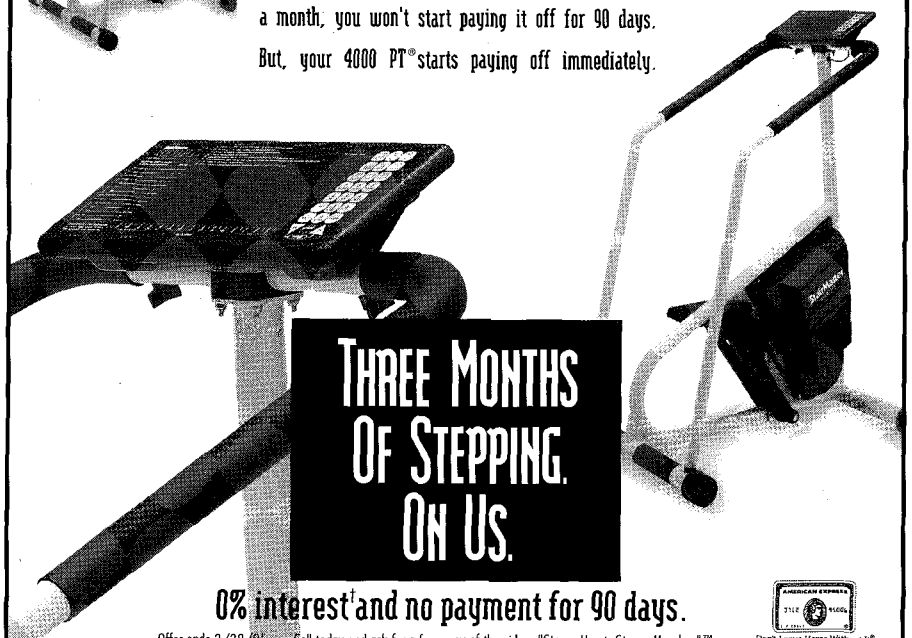

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RECOMMENDED READING

The Following Story
by Cees Nooteboom; translated by Ina Rilke (Harcourt Brace; $14.95)

Here is a very short, and almost allegorical, Dutch novel that puts many long books to shame, treating highly ambitious themes (civilization and Eros, mythology and science) with elegance and ingenuity. It is the story of an ugly little man, a travel writer and former classics teacher, who goes to sleep at home in Amsterdam one night and wakes up in a hotel room in Lisbon—the room where he committed adultery with a red-haired biology teacher some thirty years before. He looks like Socrates and thinks like an exhausted late-twentieth-century European, but his tale puts a surprisingly heartening spin on its Götterdämmerung concerns.

Speak Now Against the Day
by John Egerton (Knopf; $35)

A history of the South between 1932 and 1955: the year of the Montgomery bus boycott. Inevitably, Egerton's real subject is segregation, the defining—and deforming—characteristic of the region in those years, and he has written a prologue to the December day when Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat to a white person. As unwieldy as the book is at times, it is almost impossible to read without fascination—without wondering at the arrogance of the white oligarchy, and without marvelling at the patience and sacrifice with which the slow undoing of segregation was brought about.

Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia
by Hans Magnus Enzensberger; translated by Piers Spence and Martin Chalmers (New Press; $18)

The title piece in this collection of three tightly written essays traces a continuum from gang violence in cities—a kind of terrorism waged by young men against their fellow-citizens—to the innumerable civil disturbances around the globe, including those countries where U.N. peacekeeping forces are stationed. The German intellectual doesn't solve the puzzles of human conflict; he clarifies them.

The Coming Plague
by Laurie Garrett
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25)

A generation ago, scientists believed that antibiotics had all but conquered infectious diseases. Over the years, however, bacteria, viruses, and parasites have mutated into new forms and settled into new hosts and habitats whenever humans have developed new medicines, added pollutants to the environment, or packed troops off to war. Garrett has done a brilliant job of putting scientific work into layman's language, and the scariness of medical melodramas is offset by the excitement of scientific detection.

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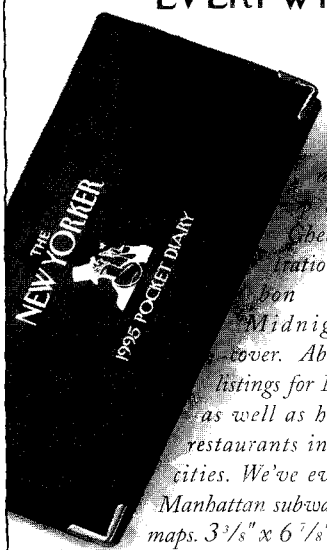

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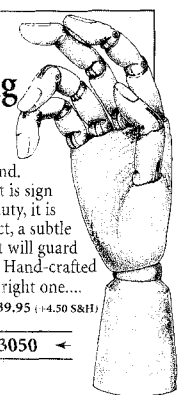

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CINEMA

AMERICAN GOTHIC

A transcendent family in New England and a wild, dysfunctional one out West—in stories by Louisa May Alcott and Jim Harrison.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

GILLIAN ARMSTRONG'S "Little Women" is the fourth movie version of Louisa May Alcott's autobiographical novel about a poor but noble New England family in the eighteen-sixties, but it doesn't feel like a remake, or like a de-luxe illustrated edition of a children's classic. It's a deceptively audacious picture. Armstrong and the screenwriter, Robin Swicord, dare to emphasize the qualities of the story which might be considered the most off-putting for contemporary audiences—the melodramatic sentimentality, the high moral seriousness—and they somehow make Alcott's alien nineteenth-century sensibility seem vivid and touching and not at all quaint. In this "Little Women," the Marches—mother, father (mostly absent), and four daughters—inhabit a coherent, fully imagined world, which Armstrong renders lyrically in an opening montage of snowy fields, plain fences, and gray winter skies. When the camera takes us into the cozy March household, the chill of the austere setting lingers, and so does the radiance of the pristine snow.

As the movie goes along, we realize that what we're seeing is not only a faithful dramatization of Alcott's familiar coming-of-age story but also a vision of the spiritual territory of the author's youth. The Marches, like the Alcotts, live by the earnest values of Emersonian transcendentalism, and Armstrong (who is Australian) gazes at these strange American idealists with affectionate awe. She has filmed "Little Women" as if it were the story of a culture coming of age and, amazingly, she makes her grand conception stick. The moral and intellectual exuberance that the characters bring to bear on everyday experience is immensely moving; it charges even the most ordinary events with heroic significance.

Forward, Marches: Winona Ryder, Trini Alvarado, Kirsten Dunst, Susan Sarandon, and Claire Danes in "Little Women."

ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

The March family saga is seen primarily through the eyes of the second daughter, Jo (Winona Ryder), who wants to be a writer. She spends much of her time up in the attic, concocting lurid Gothic fiction, which she sells to newspapers; she also writes theatrical melodramas, which she and her sisters perform at home for their own amusement. Her father calls her his "wild girl,"

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and it's her wildness—the reckless force of her creative and emotional impulses—that makes her the heroine of the story; she has to struggle harder to live up to the family's high standards than her relatively uncomplicated sisters do. Her older sister, Meg (Trini Alvarado), is pretty, even-tempered, and practical; she was born to be a wife and a mother (and fulfills her destiny before the story is over). Beth (Claire Danes) is sweet, quiet, and saintly. (She fulfills *her* destiny by going serenely to Heaven.) The youngest, Amy (played first by Kirsten Dunst and later by Samantha Mathis), is, like Jo, a bit heedless and ornery, but her moral conflicts are a lot simpler; she has only one flaw to conquer, and not a very compelling one—vanity. Jo instigates most of the action in the March household; the girls' mother, whom they call Marmee (Susan Sarandon), occasionally interrupts their spirited play to dispense some gentle wisdom or to remind them of their duties.

In the first half of the picture, the man of the house has gone off to join the Union Army, leaving his wife and daughters at home, in what amounts to a miniature utopian community of women. It's a harmonious little society, whose success is based on the miraculous balance of Marmee's rock-solid moral principles and Jo's unpredictable, unstoppable energy. Marmee keeps everyone working hard and doing good; Jo makes sure that they all have fun. Like many of the enduring classics of juvenile literature, "Little Women" charms its young readers with a vision of childhood as a thrilling, colorful, but essentially *safe* paradise—a world in which, after a long day of imaginative adventure, there's always a warm bed waiting and a firm hand to lead you to it. Armstrong gives the March girls' idyll such a rich glow that when the sisters scatter, the movie evokes a freezing sense of loss. This "Little Women" makes Alcott's seductive fantasy, of a protected place that is both a schoolhouse and a wonderful playhouse, look real; you believe in it strongly enough to feel, as Jo does, the ache of being cast out.

Armstrong's "Little Women" is more naturalistic than the earlier screen versions, and it has, in Winona Ryder, a star who is perfectly suited to its patient, low-key style. In George Cukor's 1933 version, which has a bright, crisp, theatrical flair, Katharine Hepburn's Jo dominates the film, like a dazzling star turn onstage; Hepburn, with her huge stylized gestures and her exquisitely modulated readings, creates a sort of mythic Yankee princess, and the other actors just get out of her way. (In Mervyn LeRoy's 1949 remake, June Allyson plays Jo, and it's the audience that scrambles for cover.) Ryder's acting depends not on large effects but on a slow, subtle accumulation of precisely observed details. Allowing herself to blend in with the other actors (who are almost uniformly fine), she persuades us first that she's part of the family, and only later that she's its most interesting member. By the end, her Jo is as luminous as Hepburn's, and casts a more even light.

The beauty of this movie is that it doesn't present the March sorority as a one-of-a-kind clan of superheroines, hovering above us like angels, but as flesh-and-blood women whose virtues derive from a specific set of values—from the striving, adventurous, hopeful philosophy that actually informed New England culture in the middle of the nineteenth century. As Ryder plays Jo March, we see that even this remarkable young woman comes out of a family, and out of a society. And if, in this graceful and mysteriously affecting "Little Women," that society seems like a paradise lost, it's comforting to be reminded that it isn't never-never land.

In Edward Zwick's "Legends of the Fall," the bygone grandeur of the American character is represented in more traditional movie-myth form—as a home on the range, where men ride and rope and blow bad guys out of their boots, all under cloudless skies. The movie, based on a brawny novella by Jim Harrison, is a father-and-sons saga, in which handsome brothers compete for the approval of a stern patriarch. The father here is a rugged loner named William Ludlow (Anthony Hopkins), who, we're told, gave up his Army career out of disgust with the government's Indian policy and retired to a ranch in Montana. Ludlow, abandoned by his wife, has raised three sons: Alfred (Aidan Quinn), Tristan (Brad Pitt), and Samuel (Henry Thomas). As the story moves forward—borne by swelling music, God's-country vistas, and the sonorous narration of the Ludlows' Indian hired hand, One Stab (Gordon Tootoosis)—you're gradually overcome by an epic-size sense of déjà vu: this is "East of Eden" with a bonus brother. "Legends of the Fall" is set in roughly the same period, around the time of the First World War, and it cribs plot details and structural motifs, too—from the runaway mother to the beautiful young woman (played by Julia Ormond) who creates discord between brothers. (Sober Alfred loves her, but her heart belongs to the irresponsible, long-haired, grizzly-wrestling Tristan.) And the "Fall" of the title is, as you may have feared, the Fall of Man—Man, in this case, meaning a two-fisted frontier individualist wrapped in the fur of wild animals.

Zwick and the screenwriters, Susan Shilliday and Bill Wittliff, do perform a sort of service in "Legends of the Fall": they treat Harrison's boys'-book mythology so solemnly that they expose its absurdity. Ultimately, the story, propelled by gusts of literary and visual hot air, arrives at a shockingly banal destination: the Ludlows take up arms to defend their lawless, masculine patch of Paradise against the corrupting forces of government. The climax is essentially a conventional Western-movie shootout, but this big showdown has a distinctive flowering looniness; it's a hilarious culmination of the movie's reactionary philosophy and dime-novel sensibility. What makes the scene so richly self-parodic is the presence at its center of a hobbling, bellowing Pa Ludlow, impaired by a stroke (like the father in "East of Eden") but rallying gamely to make his stand. Hopkins' performance, dully dignified at first, turns, after the stroke, into a mad music-hall impersonation of a peg-leg pirate. He scrunches up his face and narrows one eye into a menacing squint, and every noise that comes out of his crooked mouth sounds like a variation on "Ahoy!" Even before the gunfight, Hopkins' outrageous scenery-chewing has revealed the movie's true nature. "Legends of the Fall" isn't a great American myth, or even an ambitious, failed attempt to rework "East of Eden"; it's the Monty Python version of "Bonanza." ♦

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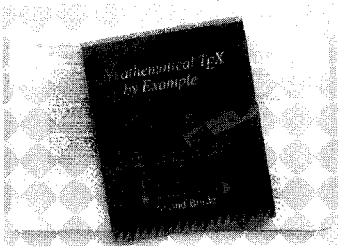
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THEATRE

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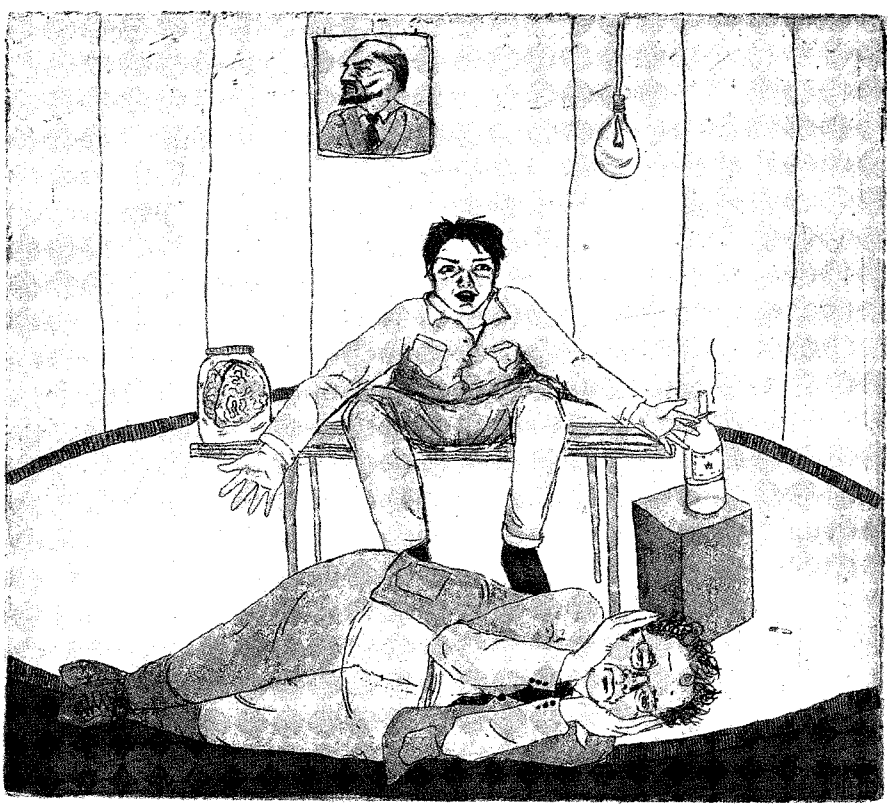
Tony Kushner and Hal Prince take on the failings of the old orders: Communism and the Crown.

BY JOHN LAHR

On the sofa in Tony Kushner's writing room are two pillow cushions decorated with the face of Karl Marx. They came to mind recently at the New York Theatre Workshop, during the prologue of Lisa Peterson's lively production of Kushner's short play "Slavs!," as the falling snow, caught in blue light, conjured the Moscow winter, and two chattering babushkas swept the icy steps of the Hall of the Soviets. Decked in winter coats and support hose, the plump biddies exuberantly argue politics in a kind of dialectical pillow fight. One of them burbles, "However reluctant one may be to grant it, history and the experience of this century presses upon us the inescapable conclusion that there is a direct continuum from Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the embrace of violence as a means of effecting change that one finds in later Marx and Engels to dictatorship plain and simple—you missed a spot—and state terror." The joke announces Kushner's jeu d'esprit: part intellectual vaudeville, part meditation on the apparent collapse of socialism. The proletariat is rarely so articulate, and the same is true of American playwrights. Kushner, who was a medievalist in college, became interested in Russia at the age of sixteen, after reading "War and Peace." Descended from Lithuanian Jews, Kush-



Roll over, Lenin: Marisa Tomei and John Christopher Jones in Kushner's "Slavs!"

LARA TOMLIN

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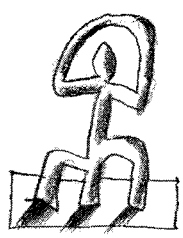
ner claims "as my birthright" the town of Kovno, near Kiev, from which hailed not only his paternal great-grandparents but such provocateurs as Emma Goldman and some of the Narodniks who assassinated Alexander II. "There must be something in the water," Kushner says.

"Slavs!" is a series of tableaux leading to the inevitable question, first posed by Nikolai Chernyshevski in the late nineteenth century, and then picked up by Lenin, "What is to be done?" Kushner's temperament insists on the discomfort of contradictions. "The trick for me was to touch bottom with this play," Kushner told me. "The starting premise was to say to myself, 'Take as hard a theatrical look as you can at the wreckage of the socialist experiment in Russia and see what can be claimed from the wreckage and what has to be let go.' " "Slavs!," which was written immediately after Kushner mounted "Perestroika" on Broadway, was meant both as a coda to "Angels in America" and as closure for his epic theatrical inquiry into revolutionary times and the nature of change. The play contains three scenes cut from the original, seven-hour version of "Angels in America," four of whose five acts were once preceded by prologues set in the Soviet Union.

Marx imagined the withering away of the state but never the withering away of ideology. "How are we to proceed without *Theory*?" says the oldest living Bolshevik, Aleksii Antedilluvianovich Prelapsarianov, in "Slavs!" With his hands juddering in front of him, the decrepit Bolshevik, superbly played by Joseph Wiseman in a shiny double-breasted gray suit that hangs on his rangy body like a flapping sail, asks his comrades, "What have you to offer in its place? Market incentives? Watered-down Bukharinite stopgap makeshift Capitalism. NEPmen! Pygmy children of a gigantic race! Change? Yes, we must change, only show me the Theory and I will be at the barricades. . . . Show me the words that will reorder the world or else keep silent." Prelapsarianov, who is an enemy of progress, sees ideology as a kind of spiritual armor, which, once abandoned, leaves the individual vulnerable and unable to defend himself against the world. "The snake sheds its skin only when a new skin is ready," he says. The collapse of ideology is acted out before our eyes, in the antechamber of the Great Hall of Deputies. The reactionary Prelapsarianov keels over and dies of an aneurysm. Debate continues, literally over the old Bolshevik's dead body. The voice of progress, Serge Esmereldovich Upgobkin (the amusing Gerald Hiken), represents ideology as a kind of heroism and divine afflatus. He urges a great leap into the future and begins to hop around a samovar. "LEAP! HIGH!" Upgobkin exhorts his comrades, jumping as he invokes the future. "See if you can see it! The NEW! The UNIMAGINED! The THAT FOR WHICH OUR DREAMS ARE ACHING! For what is hope but desiring forwards." He works himself up into a fine progressive lather, only to expire with his face frozen in a beatific smile, and he lands on top of the fallen Prelapsarianov.

The stage picture playfully makes the point of historical disarray; and the rest of "Slavs!" sets out to sketch in its spiritual consequences. Here, stagnation and the surreal often comically combine. Card games are played in an overcast Heaven; prayers are answered by a transvestite babushka bearing booze; an apparatchik hymns his love not for socialism but for socializing. The combination of fun and fulmination fits the climate of desperation. Without a functioning economic system or a system of belief, Russian society shatters into nihilism, and Kushner sees this as a weird refraction of our own society. "I have always felt—and this is indefensible except on a mystical level—that there is a twinned destiny," he says. "The reason I called the second part of 'Angels in America' 'Perestroika' is that a vast cultural, political, and even economic revolution is under way in both countries. Something immense is changing, and it's too early to say what's going to win and what's going to happen. But there is something huge happening. It's a sea change." In "Slavs!," a vision of this mysterious change appears to a lesbian couple—a doctor, Bonfila (Mary Shultz), and her young anarchist girlfriend, Katherina (Marisa Tomei)—in the repository where the brains of the Bolshevik revolutionaries (Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev among them) are preserved and where Katherina is the night watchman. Together, the women are drowning their disenchantment in drink and prayer. Katherina prays for vodka and for the faithfulness of her new lover. Bonfila prays to Lenin. "We have suffered and suffered and suffered and Paradise has not arrived," she says. "Shouldn't you come back and tell us what went wrong?" There is a flash of light, the repository door swings open, and Bonfila screams. We expect to see Lenin before us. Instead, a beautiful, speechless eight-year-old girl (Mischa Barton) walks into the room.



What has inspired Bonfila's terror, we learn in the next scene, when she is in Siberia and trying to cure the girl, is the spectre of social degeneration, which the child, Vodya Domik, represents. She suffers from chromosome damage inherited from her grandparents, who were exposed to radiation. At this point, the impotent rage of Vodya's mother (the electrifying Barbara eda-Young) fills the stage with a sulfurous, nihilistic fury: aimless, confounded, blighted. The mother demands compensation from a visiting Russian bureaucrat; but the issue of money stands for a much more profound sense of betrayal. Her life has been robbed of meaning and direction. She lets rip at a toadying apparatchik when he tries to appease her. "Fuck this century!" she shouts. "Fuck your leader! Fuck the state! Fuck all governments, fuck the motherland, fuck your mother, your father and you!" There is nothing socially redeeming in this outburst, but Kushner perceives it as a sign of hope. "It leads her to reject fascism, as it leads her to reject any other form of government," he says. "But whether or not she can ever be reached again or be brought to believe in any system again is scary. It's also a situation we're faced with all over the United States. The people who voted in the Newt Gingrich gang are only a fifth of the population. The people who didn't come out and vote are the people who basically decided that there is no hope for them, that there is no government that will serve them, that there is no ideology they can cling to."

The play ends with the dead Bolshevik ideologues grousing in Heaven. They are joined by Vodya Domik, who has now found her tongue, and it's she who says the unsayable, suggesting that in the last eight hundred years of communitarian struggle there may have been nothing worth saving. "Perhaps the

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principles were always wrong," she begins, listing social and economic justice, equality, community, the end of the master/slave relationship. "These are desirable but not realizable on the earth." She goes on to say that perhaps history will judge even the word "socialist" as "a foul epithet," and that "to the ravages of Capital there will be no conceivable alternative." It's a powerful and well-judged moment of ambiguity, a speech that Kushner wrote on the first day of the play's first rehearsal, in Louisville. "I felt that somebody should state that as a possibility, not as a finality," he says. "It's from that point that you ask the question 'What is to be done?' " The words echo three times in the play's last beats, as the old Bolsheviks turn their eyes from one another to us. In theatre, to move an audience you have to unbalance it first; Kushner, even in a small work like "Slavs!," is capable of cajoling us out of our received opinions through the power of his heart and his mind.

"And this is Sebastian, our newlywed."

• •

SLAVIC entropy takes another form in the Hal Prince musical "The Petrified Prince," at the Public Theatre. A fable of emotional paralysis, the musical is set in 1807 and has been adapted by Edward Gallardo from a screenplay by Ingmar Bergman. Here, on a map that serves as a pre-show curtain to James Youmans' beautifully designed red-and-gold toy-theatre set, all roads lead to Slavonia. Napoleon veers down from the left, and the Russian bear from the right. There's also an unmapped challenge, from Pope Pius VII (Ralph Byers) and from Roberta (Loni Ackerman), the niece of the dead Slavonian king. She is hiding out in exile with Gypsies in Bohemia and waiting to seize the throne from Prince Samson (Alexander Gaberman), an ironically named weakling, who is propped up by his mother, Queen Katarina (Candy Buckley), a predatory whore who rises to power by literally screwing the king to death. Prince Samson, who spends most of the evening in a wheelchair, is half Hamlet and half Sondheim. He can't move, he can't feel, he can't act. He waits passively, like Bobby in Sondheim's "Company," which Prince also directed, for someone to make him feel. Prince, an old pro, has marshalled the expert, moody lighting of Howell Binkley, the classy costuming of Judith Dolin, and the shrewd choreography of Rob Marshall to great effect in a swift, slick, masterly display of showmanship. Here, with puppets, revolving stages, and forests of blue birch, the eye gets a feast; but the ear gets a dog's dinner. Prince seems to be trying to grow a sapling Sondheim in Michael John LaChiusa, who wrote the music and lyrics, but he can't deliver a memorable melody or a distinguished rhyme. Only in "Without Me," which is vamped with great gusto by Ms. Buckley and punched up with the help of a pair of high-stepping Palace Guards, does a LaChiusa song come up to par. Putting her tapered leg on the Prince's wheelchair, the Queen belts out:

> Don't you worry, sauerkraut;
> Mutti is here to help you out.
> I will act maternally;
> Baby can't get along without me.

The show's message is the importance of feeling, but its theatrical language is detachment. "The Petrified Prince" is filled with the bric-a-brac of high camp—homosexual priests and Popes, castrating mothers—but LaChiusa hasn't the words or the wit to make the humor anything but notional. At least three songs—Roberta's athletic "A Woman in Search of Happiness," where she plays victim and acts butch; "Pointy's Lament," where the Cardinal sings to the Pope about falling in love with His Holiness; and "One Little Taste," a song about sex in the name of pastry, sung by the Queen when she returns to her old Viennese bordello to choose a whore to resuscitate her son's heart—suggest good musical ideas that have not been properly teased into life. The score is jejune, and the flamboyance of Prince's expert production makes it seem even slighter. The musical moves inexorably toward Samson's redemption through the love of Elise (the fine-voiced Daisy Prince). But what is said in that moment of musical revelation? Twenty-seven actors, three-quarters of a million dollars, and months of development come down to this:

> Feel
> If you can feel
> Then you can
> Speak
> Shout
> Rise
> Stand . . .

And so it goes. Despite all the dough and the sweat and the high quality of the ingredients, the confection doesn't rise. Bergman may have dreamed up the recipe, but musically "The Petrified Prince" is as flat as a Swedish pancake. ♦

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A STUDIO OF THEIR OWN

BY RICHARD LIEBMANN-SMITH

Mr. Michael Eisner
Chairman
The Walt Disney Company
Burbank, California

DEAR MR. EISNER:

This is a very difficult letter for me to write, but I wanted you to have the news directly from me and not hear it from some waiter at Spago: Donald, Goofy, and I have decided to leave the Disney organization to form a new studio.

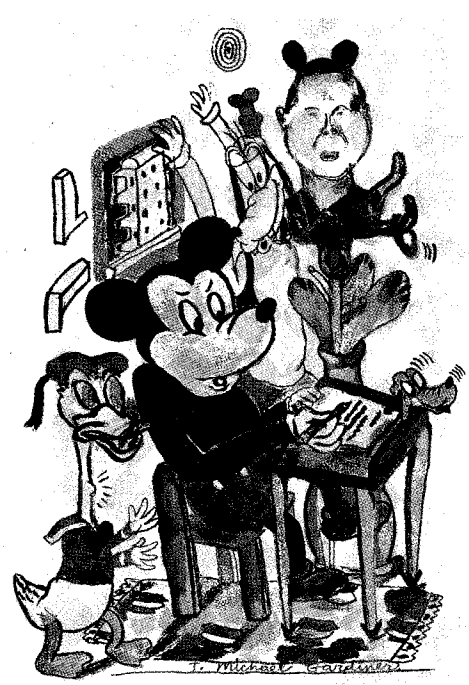
I realize that from your point of view our timing is unfortunate. What with the disappointing performance of Euro Disney, the recent personnel crises at the executive level, and the collapse of your plans for that Civil War history deal in Virginia, I'm sure the last thing you need right now is for three of your biggest stars to bail out and go into competition with you.

But to some extent, I regret to say, you've brought this on yourself. As you're no doubt aware, Goofy has long been unhappy at Disney. He feels he's been laboring for decades in the shadow of Pluto, who, though he can't even speak, has always landed the top-dog roles simply because he actually looks like a dog. When you passed over Goofy for *both* title roles in "Beauty and the Beast," Goofy took it as a signal that you had no further use for his talents. That's when he came to me and Donald with the idea for a new studio.

At first, of course, I was reluctant to even consider leaving the Disney family. (And, by the way, no matter how our new venture works out, I'll be happy to honor my obligations for theme-park and Mickey Mouse Club appearances.) Walt, as I've often said, was like a father to us. The fact is, though, that it's been a long, long time since we felt his personal touch. Some of us—you know as well as I do who I mean—are even being computer-enhanced. Frankly, it's a little demeaning to be treated as an "element" in some vast global marketing strategy that encompasses everything from resort hotels to shoelaces.

We have our own voices, after all, and they're very different now from the ones Walt gave us. Donald's quacking gibberish has long been an enormous embarrassment for him, and my own piping falsetto, I'm afraid, strikes the contemporary ear as little more than a bad Michael Jackson imitation.

A dream is a wish your heart makes, as Cinderella—or was it Freud?—used to say. And our dream is to produce our own versions of the classics. I've always wanted to do an animated remake of "Of Mice and Men," Donald has his eye on Ibsen's "The Wild Duck," and Goofy tells me he's just dying to sink his teeth into Lear. Can you honestly say that the Disney organization, as it's now structured, would support us in such ambitious projects?



It's not so much the money—as you know, I'm quite comfortable, and Donald's net worth exceeds even that of his fabulously wealthy mentor Scrooge McDuck. No, it's the chance to have total artistic control. We've already discussed some of these projects with other members of the cartoon community, and the phones have been literally—ours being an animated world—jumping off the hooks. We've opened negotiations with Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, Yosemite Sam, and even Donald's longtime rival Daffy, who's pitched a very exciting all-duck "Oedipus at Colonus."

Believe me, Mr. Eisner, this has been a difficult decision for all of us. This will be the first time in history that a major studio is in the white-gloved, three-fingered hands of animated characters, and the world will be watching. Minnie, especially—she says hi—has expressed concern that this new venture might eat up my life, leaving little time for her and the kids. I've explained that I admire Goofy as an artist and fellow cartoon mammal, but that I hope I never *become* Goofy, working like a dog.

Oh well, now it's time to say goodbye. I apologize for any anguish our decision may cause you and the rest of our friends at Disney. We only wish the best for you.

See ya real soon,
MICKEY

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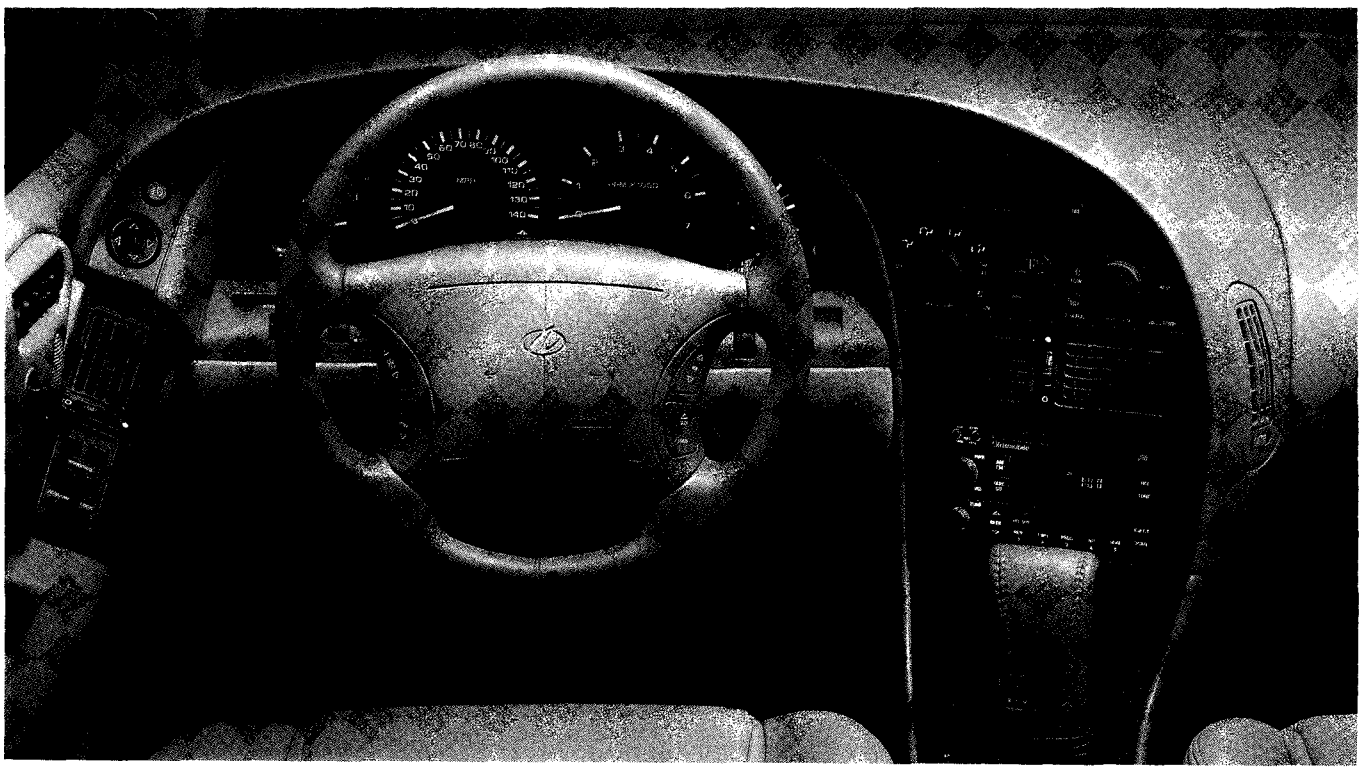
Rarely has sitting down been so exhilarating.



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